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TRB

from Washington ®
May 28, 1977

The Critical Mass

It's a high, wood-paneled, cork-floored, 40-foot-ceilinged "Doomsday Room" where 27 spectators, eight reporters, three witnesses and one senator are groping for a policy to save the world. The one senator is John Glenn, Democrat of Ohio, the first American to orbit the earth; now he's Mr. Uranium. What is an astronaut doing here? He acknowledges ruefully that his previous celebrity in space flying sometimes makes it hard for others to remember he's a politician, and a senator; at 56, he says, he's trying to live down a misspent youth. He's one of these open-faced scientific types with thinning blond hair and dimples; a man you instantly like, who looks about 30: a younger (and brighter) Jerry Ford. He's chairman (of all things) of the Subcommittee on Energy, Nuclear Proliferation, and Federal Services. That's where he's trying to save the world—nuclear proliferation. It's a goal people generally approve of in the abstract but one whose details make the average listener's eyes glaze over: megawatts, heavy water, isotopes. . . . oh, for crying out loud.

There comes a time, though, when the world's nations, like fissionable material, approach a critical mass; where they can't take any more political self-restraint and begin a chain reaction. It looks as though that time were about here. It's the point at which the non-nuclear nations see so many countries going nuclear that they realize continued abstinence is meaningless. Sure, there's a Nuclear Proliferation Treaty that the superpowers have worked out and persuaded a lot of other countries to sign. But that rumble you hear, that cloud in the sky with its mushroom shape, that may be a signal that the NPT dam is about to wash out. It sounds that way; it looks that way; maybe 10 years, maybe five, maybe . . . . Then the world will go nuclear.

Of all people Jerry Ford, or at any rate his advisers, caught the warning first. Jimmy Carter had been making jibes about Ford's nuclear policy in the election. So suddenly and unexpectedly just before the vote (October 28) President Ford announced a basic shift in US policy: he downgraded the emphasis on plutonium processing. It was a radical change. It is doubtful if the public even yet realizes how radical. President Carter followed it up with his statements calling for the indefinite deferral of the whole multibillion-dollar breeder reactor program at home, and urging that similar action be taken abroad.

One item tells how drastic this was (let alone the shelving of the projects). The Energy Research and Development Administration ordered more than 25,000 pamphlets on nuclear energy destroyed. It was like the quick change of party line in Russia when Khruschev went. One Oak Ridge pamphlet issued a year ago said, "The breeder reactor would enable us to make much more efficient and economical use of our uranium resources." It didn't mention that you also get plutonium and bombs. A breeder reactor is part of the plutonium creating cycle that we're trying to halt. Plutonium is what they stuff A-bombs with.

Bewilderment and anger over the abrupt reversal have risen from the breeder reactor industry, and with some reason. The pros and cons are being aired before the John Glenn subcommittee where Astronaut Glenn is strongly supported by Senators Percy, Javits and others who manage to look in. It should be understood that the ordinary commercial nuclear reactor is *not* condemned by Mr. Carter. About 10 percent of all power in the US is now generated by such reactors of the so-called tame, or "thermal type," which have had two decades of commercial operation without a catastrophic accident or "melt down" as the scientists picturesquely put it. The US has been building these at home and selling them, and uranium fuel, abroad. Breeder reactors are different.

One of the biggest trade wars in history is underway to sell these lethal, fast-breeder, enormously expensive nuclear reactors to the only market left—the third world countries that can't afford them. With a fast breeder and other facilities you can get plutonium as a by-product and make bombs. India did it the other day, to the consternation of Canada and the United

(continued on page 41)

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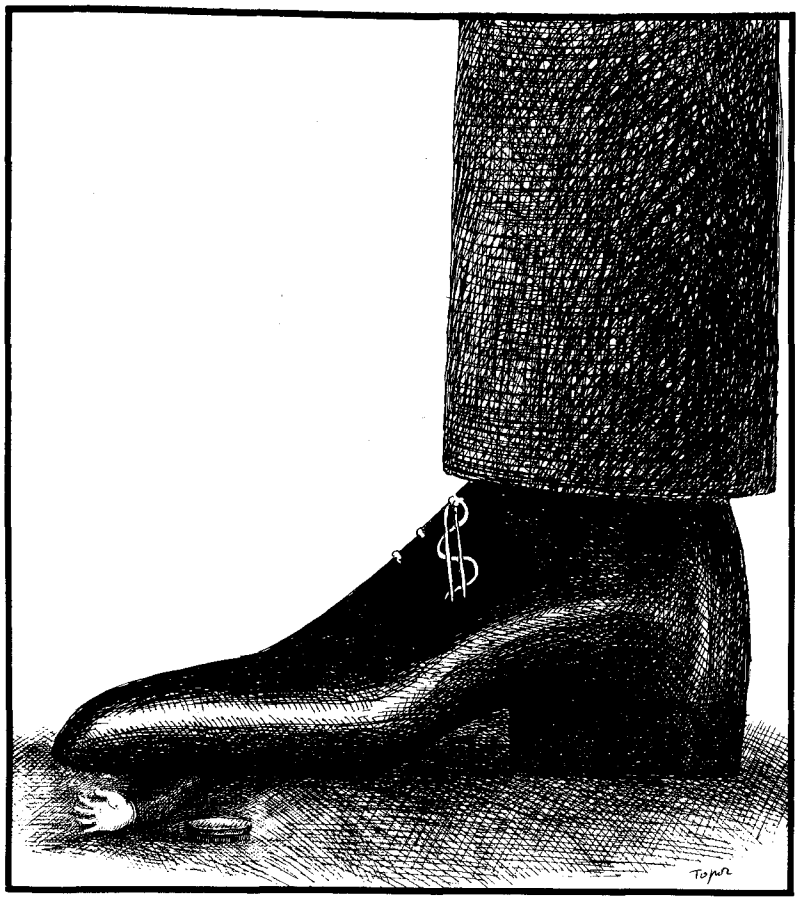

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A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 176, No. 22, Issue 3255, May 28, 1977. Published weekly (except the issues of January 8, July 16, August 13, August 27, December 31) and distributed by *The New Republic*, Inc., 1220 19th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20036. Phone 331-7494. Single copy, 75¢; Yearly subscriptions, $21; foreign, $24; students, $14.

Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies and changes of address to Subscription Department, *The New Republic*, 381 West Center Street, Marion, Ohio 43302. Copyright 1977 by *The New Republic*, Inc. Item g. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Reader's Guide.

Cover: "Benjamin Franklin at the Court of France," engraving by W. O. Geller (1853) after the painting by Baron Jolly. Courtesy of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms, Department of State, Washington, D. C. Photographic reproduction by Max Mackenzie.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

May 28, 1977

Begin the Begin

Before they despair or condemn, Americans should try to understand what really happened in the Israeli elections and why. Menahem Begin and his right-wing Likud party won no resounding victory, gaining only two or three more seats in Knesset, the Israeli parliament, than they won in 1973. The election was a crushing rebuke to the Labor party, which lost 21 seats. The election was not decided primarily on foreign policy issues, however significant—dire, even—the international consequences may be. Israeli voters were fed up with the Labor alignment that had dominated the country for 29 years and the Zionist movement for half a century. They were sick of scandals, strikes, inflation, inefficiency and corruption, and they wanted a change. Labor's candidate for prime minister, Defense Minister Shimon Peres, and the country's principal reformer, archaeologist Yigal Yadin, head of the new Democratic Movement for Change, both promised they would make things different in Israel; but both were products of the Labor alignment, politically and culturally, and weren't seen as change enough. Young people, workers, the Oriental Jewish majority, soldiers and a large chunk of former Labor voters decided to take a big gamble to shake up their society. Israel remains a gutsy, vibrant democracy, for all its faults and problems. The morning after election day, Israelis seem to have awakened as stunned as the rest of the world by what they had done—perhaps no one more so than Begin himself, who has spent virtually his entire political career in opposition and could not have expected to emerge, after all this time, leader of his country.

In spite of their domestic dissatisfactions, Israeli voters might have been dissuaded from supporting the Likud out of fear that its intransigent foreign policy would cause a breakdown in relations with the United States, Israel's major source of international political support and its sole source of military sustenance. This year, however, the political insensitivity of the Carter administration led many in the Israeli electorate to doubt Washington's reliability and Labor's ability to stand up to US pressure. Over the past two months, Carter and other administration officials have hinted repeatedly—and then denied hastily—that the United States intends to impose a peace settlement on the Middle East requiring Israeli withdrawal to its 1967 borders and creating a Palestinian state on Jordan's West Bank, possibly dominated by the Palestine

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Liberation Organization. The new administration's policy on arms sales also suggested an erosion in Washington's dedication to Israeli security.

First, President Carter reversed President Ford's signed commitments on arms to Israel, and within the last three weeks the new administration's option paper on world conventional arms sales (PRM 12) suggested that Israel's historic special relationship with the United States was at an end. After intervention by pro-Israel senators and by Vice President Mondale, the President reaffirmed Israel's special status, but it should not have been necessary for him to do so, least of all on the eve of an election in which the United States had an interest, in the name of Middle East peace, in bolstering the Labor party against its more hawkish opposition.

Left, right and center, there is fundamental agreement in Israeli politics that the country's survival continues to be threatened by the Arabs, despite mild words of moderation emanating—only lately—from some Arab national leaders. The difference between a hawk and a dove in Israel is not whether that person thinks Assad or Sadat would push Israel into the sea if it were possible, but whether he or she thinks that, over time, these Arab leaders can be induced to abandon their dreams of Israel's destruction. Even the doves look in vain for signs that Arab leaders are making the same noises about peace with Israel to their own populations as they do for external consumption, particularly in the United States. Israelis of all political stripes cannot be sure that, were they to make a risky settlement with an Arab leader one day, he might not be shot or toppled the next, and his place taken by a bitter-end rejectionist who would use peace borders as a better vantage point for attacks on Israel. Moreover, the Israelis have no proof that the Palestine Liberation Organization ever will recognize Israel's right to exist. Each time Yassir Arafat whispers to an American correspondent, a US senator, a Saudi prince or a Soviet diplomat that he would be satisfied to be Prime Minister of the West Bank alone, and not all Palestine, the PLO issues a public statement saying Arafat was misquoted or misinterpreted. And the Palestine National Council, meeting in Cairo this March, did nothing to alter the Palestinian covenant that calls, in no less than 15 places, for Israel's destruction. It is, in any case, not words which Israel seeks, but concrete demonstrations of willingness to live in peace.

So it is only with the greatest reluctance, caution, pain and trepidation that Israel can contemplate giving up land it captured in the 1967 war—land it views as providing a security buffer in the event of war or as bargaining currency in a drawn-out peace process. Giving up *all* the occupied territories is unthinkable across most of Israel's political spectrum. A different attitude, increasingly opposed to Israel's, is beginning to prevail in the United States. Already dominant in the Executive Branch and steadily gaining ground in Congress, the press and the population, it holds that the long term security of Israel, and the well being of the United States and the rest of the world, lies in a peace settlement between the Arabs involving Israel's giving up almost all the land captured in 1967. Impelled by fears of regional war, or global war, and by the need to secure Western oil supplies, President Carter's is the third American administration to seek such a settlement. President Nixon failed with the Rogers plan, which was premature and one-sided. Secretary of State Kissinger failed with step-by-step during the Ford administration because he ran out of time. Theoretically, Carter's plan offers some hope of success, but it may have failed already in the preliminaries.

Based on the report of a panel assembled in 1975 by the Brookings Institution, Carter's plan appears to call for Israel's phasing out of captured Arab territories in Sinai and the Golan Heights, while Egypt and Syria phase toward full comity with Israel. In the West Bank, the President has been talking about a "Palestinian homeland," which obviously would involve Israeli withdrawals, but he has said that virtually everything connected with the creation and governance of that homeland is open to negotiation. At the end of a years-long process, Carter seems to intend, the Arabs would have virtually everything they say they want in land, and Israel would have everything it wants in guarantees of peace. There is no question of imposing such a solution; it simply can't be done, though an American administration can push hard for its ideas, even threaten to stop co-operating with countries that will not co-operate with the United States.

Eventually, Carter's plan would have required a coming-to-terms between the United States and Israel, and within each country. By dextrous diplomacy, this might have occurred reasonably painlessly after and if the United States had won assurances from the Arabs that return of captured territories would bring about full recognition of and peace with Israel. With such guarantees in hand, Carter might have turned to the Israelis and asked for reciprocal promises that the Arabs could one day have something just short of all

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Correspondence

Cheers

To the editors:

I'm becoming more and more convinced that often the person doing the interviewing or writing about a public official is the one who should be questioned. A perfect example of this is P. T.'s reporting in the April 3rd *Washington Diarist* that Rosalynn Carter was questioned about her moderate drinking habits by someone from the *New York Times*. Somehow, the way P. T. writes about this, it sounds as if Rosalynn Carter is the one with the problem rather than the people who must "fortify themselves elsewhere before enduring presidential entertainment."

I would find a discussion with P. T. fascinating in which he deals with such questions as: Why he feels guests at the White House have such a desperate need for alcohol? Are the guests overawed at being there and do they need a little something to calm themselves down so they won't appear apprehensive? Are they compulsive drinkers to begin with? Does such an auspicious occasion make them so nervous they can't cope without booze? Do they fear doing the wrong thing or saying the wrong thing unless they've had enough liquor to quiet their anxieties?

Mildred Kavanaugh
Olympia, Washington

In reply:

Miss Kavanaugh suggests I said that White House guests have a "desperate" need for alcohol. I did not say that, and since the misunderstanding informs most of her letter, I cannot comment. What I find extraordinary about Rosalynn Carter's dry White House is simply this: it is not uncommon for people who do not drink to offer liquor to their guests, but quite astonishingly rude for people who *do* drink (the Carters) to *deny* liquor to their guests.

P. T.

Stimulating the economy

To the editors:

In your editorial on energy ("Strong Medicine, *TNR*, Apr. 30), you raise the question, whether conservation does not "stunt economic growth." This reminds me of the old joke among economists: when a bachelor marries his household maid, National Income shrinks. You might just as well ask whether the use of labor-saving machinery does not stunt economic growth, for obviously, if I can obtain the same service with less effort, in the balance fewer people will be employed. Or you might ask whether the invention of a better car—that is, by definition, one that will take me to my destination for less money—will not stunt economic growth.

In all these examples you define economic growth by the number of dollars that change hands. *Real* economic growth consists in an increase of satisfactions, be they in terms of goods or services or conveniences. Admittedly, that may be a quantity difficult to measure, but by no means does the consumption of oil and gas, in and by itself, indicate whether a nation is happier or is "growing." If you wish to increase the national product, you ought to see to it that everybody buys an ancient Rolls Royce.

Henry Pachter
Rutgers University

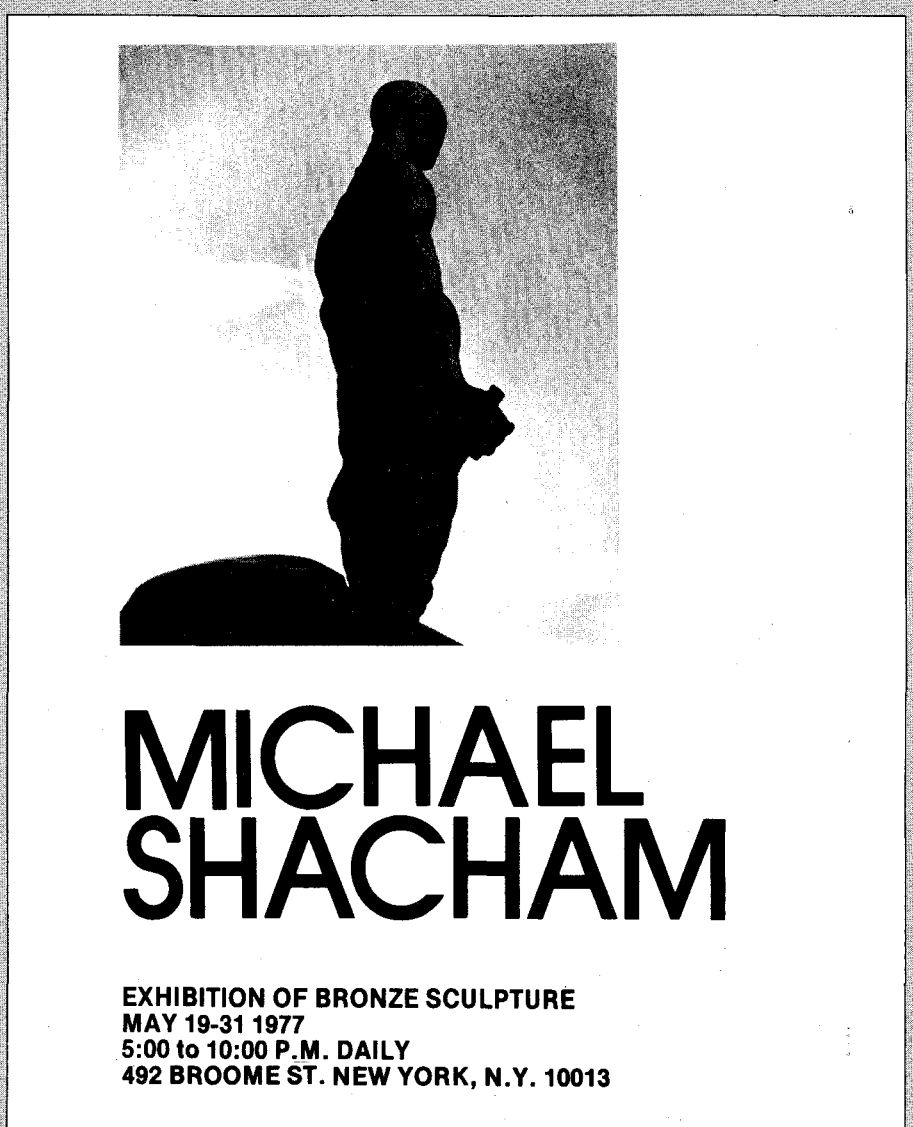
Ironclad contract

To the editors:

John Osborne, at the beginning of his excellent "White House Watch" for April 23rd, comments on Vice President Mondale's leaving a staff meeting before it was over, even though President Carter was presiding. Mr. Osborne paraphrases White House staffers as attributing Mr. Mondale's ability to do this to the rapport between him and Mr. Carter.

There is a much simpler explanation. Mr. Mondale has job security.

David S. Bratman
Berkeley, California



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their land back with, of course, some special arrangements made for Jerusalem. Then, Israel would have had to examine its hopes and fears as a society. Presented with concrete Arab concessions supplemented by American security guarantees, however iffy, and at the conclusion of a confidence-building diplomatic process, Israel probably would elect peace. If she did not, there would inevitably have been a reexamination of the extent of the US commitment to Israel.

Unfortunately, perhaps tragically, Carter diplomacy was not conducted dextrously. It was barely conducted at all, in fact—just talked about in press conferences and town meetings. What Israelis heard frightened them, and was one factor in their abandoning caution and electing a Likud government. The Likud says it is willing to talk with Egypt and Syria about settlements in Sinai and the Golan Heights, but it contemplates no Israeli abandonment of the West Bank, ever. This virtually precludes settlement of the Palestinian issue that the Arabs regard as the core of the Middle East dilemma. The Arabs already are interpreting the election results as confirmation of their suspicions that Israel has no interest in peace. They will be tempted to talk themselves into preparing for war, but the Carter administration should devote itself to keeping the Arabs in a mood to talk peace.

It is not immediately clear what the election results will do to US-Israeli relations. The composition of Begin's ruling coalition will have a bearing on the stand the new Prime Minister presents to President Carter when he visits Washington in June or July. At a best that is too good to hope for, Begin's reputation for toughness might give him a freedom to bargain with the Arabs similar to Nixon's in dealing with Russia and China and De Gaulle's in settling with the Algerian rebels. However, it is only realistic to expect that Begin's will be less flexible and forthright than past Israeli governments, if not absolutely unyielding. We cannot rule out a monumental political crisis between Israel and the Carter administration, and between the administration and Israel's friends in Congress, with Americans forced to choose up sides in a bitter fight. Israel has won several tests of strength pitting Congress against the American administration—the latest just this month in the arms sales controversy—but so far a full-scale crunch always has been avoided.

The elevation of Begin to national leadership severely cripples Israel's position in any political test. His position on the West Bank is simply unconscionable. Begin once suggested that Israel annex the West Bank and give full citizenship to its Arab residents. But he has dropped even that Roman idea, apparently realizing that it eventually would lead to an Israel with an Arab majority. So, the effective meaning of Begin's platform is that Israel should permanently occupy the West Bank, denying political rights to its residents. This would be a burden on Israel's conscience that a society built by the oppressed could not bear. And it would not be supported under any conditions, and it shouldn't be, by our own government.

Israel's position is damaged further by Begin's background as leader of the Irgun prior to and during Israel's war for independence. The Irgun, during the pre-independence period, was responsible for blowing up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing 95 British soldiers, and took part in the massacre of Arab civilians at Deir Yassin. Though Begin has been a politician of conservative habits for 30 years, and his Irgun never killed with the self-satisfied and indiscriminate aplomb of the PLO, Israel is in the shaky position of condemning Arab terrorism while designating an ex-terrorist as its national leader.

The people and government of the United States should not conclude from the election results that the Israeli public is committed to Begin's beliefs or to Begin. The Arabs are urging President Carter to assume the worst and immediately exert pressure on Israel to come to terms. Such a course would make Israel more frightened and Begin more intransigent. It would give him political strength he hasn't yet shown. If Begin attempts to form a government exclusively of right-wing and religious factions, his regime will be weak—though strident—and may fall, bringing on new elections. If Begin stretches to attain a broader coalition—including Yadin's DMC either alone or along with Labor—he will have to moderate his foreign policy. In either event, Menahem Begin will not quite have his way. So progress toward peace, though more difficult to achieve, may still be possible, and the Carter administration should not panic and act as if it weren't.

The Business Issue

Copies of last week's special issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC, "The Business of America," are available for $1.00 prepaid from The New Republic offices at 1220 19th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036

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Holding Pattern over New York

This month the Concorde supersonic jet celebrates its first anniversary of commercial use between Europe and the US. Its British and French owners have won a victory, though a small one. They have shown that it is possible for old allies to lean on American officials to have US noise and air pollution rules bent a little to suit them, and they have proved that one or two loud Concorde flights a day—particularly if they are sent to a remote airport like Dulles in Virginia—do not disturb the neighbors. The British and French may now parlay this small triumph into a case for expanded Concorde service, not just at remote sites, but also at city airports in populous areas.

Concorde is not, as is often suggested, a bit of future technology. It is beautiful, fast and comfortable, but it has so many other undesirable and outdated qualities that it is safe to say nothing like it will be built again. Its virtue is its speed: on transatlantic flights, it cuts the travel time between Europe and America by four hours, and if it were allowed to fly the Pacific route, it would cut the time between Los Angeles and Tokyo by seven hours. (It can only be used on transoceanic flights because countries will not tolerate its sonic booms over land.) But speed is no longer the overriding virtue in transportation machinery, as we are learning from automobiles. Efficiency, cleanness and quietness are more important than they once were, and future aircraft designers will probably rank them more important than sheer speed.

The Concorde is smokier, noisier and more wasteful of energy than the subsonic jets used by commercial airlines in the US. Despite this, the British and French were able to persuade American officials that the environmental rules that were being enforced for subsonic planes should not be applied to the Concorde. Concorde's owners succeeded in creating a special category of FAA emissions standards that covers only supersonic craft, and in this way they got around the system. One sympathizes with their argument—that they couldn't have known when they began the multi-billion-dollar Concorde project that America would become finicky about airplane noise and fumes. One sympathizes, but one knows that giving the Concorde a special exemption will encourage others to ask for the same.

Coming Next Week:

Dilemmas in
International Trade

For about a year, the Federal Aviation Administration has been monitoring the noise that Concorde makes and the complaints received from people who live near Dulles airport, the only place in the US where the plane may land. The test run was started at the instance of former Transportation Secretary William Coleman, Jr. The FAA found what it expected it would find: the Concorde is perceived to be about twice as loud as the loudest subsonic planes. Complaints have been phoned to the FAA in an uneven trickle from the handful of small towns directly beneath the take-off and landing path. In a highly unscientific study, we polled some of these neighbors of Dulles Airport last week to find out what they thought of the plane. All of them said they could distinguish the sound of the Concorde from other airplane sounds, because as one person put it, the Concorde "rumbles longer." Few objected to the noise, but one woman whose house is directly beneath the take-off route said that it was "considerably louder than the other planes. If there were a lot of them coming through, I'd have to move." Frank Raslow, a member of the local county board of supervisors, said the plane was "bothersome, but not unbearable." More than one or two flights a day, however, might make it unbearable. That attitude seems to typify the feeling of those who live under the take-off route: the Concorde is all right in limited doses.

The British and French are trying to persuade the New York Port Authority to let Concorde land at Kennedy Airport, which would open up a rich new market for supersonic travel. Kennedy is already one of the busiest airports in the country, and the people who live near it in Queens feel that adding Concorde's noise to what they endure now not only would destroy their peace of mind, but would reduce the value of their property. They have organized protests against the Concorde, generated a good deal of news copy and won Mayor Abe Beame and Governor Hugh Carey to their side. The Port Authority has refused until now to let the plane land; it may be inhibited by the threat of lawsuits from the people of Queens. But on May 11, a state judge ruled that New York would have to defer to federal officials on this matter, and if the decision is upheld, it may mean that the burden of liability will be shifted to the US Government. If that happens, the plane probably will land.

At the same time, Braniff Air Lines has asked for permission to fly the Concorde from Dulles airport to Dallas, Texas, where the company hopes to tap another pool of wealthy travelers. Texas would welcome the Concorde. The problem in this case is not one of local resistance, for the airport is far from the city, but one that involves the federal bureaucracy. If the Concorde is to be flown by an American company, it must first receive a certificate of safety and airworthiness from the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA began work on such a certificate in the '60s, but stopped because no American company seemed interested in

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flying the Concorde. Now that Braniff is interested, the FAA must finish its review.

Documents obtained by John Hellegers of the Environmental Defense Fund show that when the FAA was last at work on this project, it was concerned about the safety of the Concorde's fuel system. In April, Hellegers got from the FAA a copy of a study done in 1972 which concluded that "there will be a significant increase in the risk of fire and explosion within the Concorde fuel tanks by reason of the collective effects of the unique design, environment and operation of the aircraft." The experts recommended that a "nitrogen inerting system" be installed in the tanks to reduce the risk. A spokesman at the Concorde's press agency in Washington, DC explained last week that no such system was installed, but that other changes in design were made to accomplish the same thing. The FAA's inspectors have been dispatched to Europe to examine the plane and quiz its designers once again to determine whether this and other safety requirements have been met. Their report should be out soon.

Even if the Concorde satisfies the FAA that it is safe and quiet and clean enough to land at US airports, it will have another fundamental problem that may be incurable. It loses money. It may not be able to pay for its own maintenance. This flaw, and not the technical weaknesses, eventually will put the Concorde out of its misery.

Brouhaha in Brooklyn, Finis

The March 12 *TNR* carried an article, "Brouhaha in Brooklyn" by Diane Ravitch, about attempts to dismiss Professor Michael Selzer from the Brooklyn College political science department because of alleged involvement with the CIA. This article provoked a heated response from Professor Philippa Strum, chairman of the departmental committee that forwarded the charges to the president of Brooklyn College (Correspondence, May 7).

On April 21 the president, John Kneller, dropped the matter, saying "There are not sufficient grounds to warrant instituting formal charges against Professor Selzer." Kneller said the department's contention that Selzer engaged in covert CIA activity "cannot be sustained." He also reprimanded the department, saying it "should have informed itself more fully about the facts" and "should have discouraged the efforts of some of its members to use Professor Selzer's situation to make a public case against the Central Intelligence Agency."

But Professor Selzer will be leaving Brooklyn College anyway. The political science department voted earlier this month to deny him tenure.

White House Watch

Jimmy and Britain

London

On the morning of Jimmy Carter's last day in Britain, a British friend telephoned this reporter from her home in Sussex near the Channel coast. "I just want to be sure, " the friend said, "that you understand what a great thing your Jimmy's visit is for this tired old country. It's wonderful, it's marvelous. He has brought us a breath of fresh air." That evening, bidding the President farewell with unmistakable gratitude and affection, Prime Minister James Callaghan told Carter, "You have brought us a breath of fresh air." Britain's national press, usually rather snooty to visiting American dignitaries and especially so when they personify American leadership and power as Carter did, went ape over him. "HO'WAY, YO'ALL!," the *Daily Telegraph* headlined its drooly account of Carter's visit to Newcastle and northeastern England, thus managing in four syllables to distort his rendition of "Ha-way, tha lads!," the Tynesiders' traditional cry of encouragement to their soccer teams, and to pervert "y'all" or "you all" in a way no American southerner ever would. At Washington Old Town, after Carter visited a house inhabited in the 12th century by ancestors of George Washington and planted what turned out to be a dead tulip tree from Mount Vernon on a village green, people wept when he finished shaking all the hands he could reach and departed. Reviewing the economic and NATO summit conferences that brought Carter to London, the weekly *Spectator* said, "The West is lucky to have a man who learns readily and who wears the clothes of leadership lightly and even elegantly."

During a stay in London after the President went home, renewing acquaintance with friends and with a city I have known and loved since 1938, I thought and talked a lot about the phenomenon that Carter's visit and reception constituted. He thought about it and discussed it with others, too. He was heard to say with somewhat self-conscious modesty that the reception accorded him was more of a tribute to "our great country" than to him. He also said that he was impressed as he'd never been before with the difficulties that democracies—all of the democracies represented at the seven-nation summit—have in dealing with the problems of high unemployment and simultaneous inflation. Communist governments, he noted wistfully, could create jobs and force people to take them at dictated wages in a way that democratic governments couldn't. The accounts heard in London raised doubt that Carter fully understood when he left

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how strongly British officials felt that during the preliminaries to the economic summit and at the conference they more than anyone else sold him the proposition, critical to Britain, that inflation creates rather than cures unemployment and that the high proportion of young people among the unemployed in all industrial countries makes it a socially explosive international problem which requires cooperative international solutions. The proposition is critical to Britain because expanded access to expanding American, West German and Japanese markets for its exports holds the principal hope of reducing British unemployment and inflation rates.

Whether at British instance or not, and Carter probably didn't need all that much selling, his acceptance and assertion of the proposition contributed to the official enthusiasm. But what of the popular enthusiasm evident during his day in the northeast and whenever he appeared in London? It's true that American presidents evoke enthusiasm often amounting to hysteria wherever they appear, at home or abroad. Airport and other crowds besieged Nixon at the depths of his fall. Good old, dull old Gerald Ford roused 'em to the very end. Yet there unquestionably was something special, some indefinable and unusual quality of fervor in the British crowd reaction. Now our Jimmy isn't an electric or electrifying personality, not by ordinary standards anyhow. He's shortish, a bit stooped, endowed with a face and a look—that grin!—that on occasion can be vacuous and silly. These characteristics were as visible in Britain as they are at home and they made no more difference here than they do there. Mulling and talking the thing over with Britons, and with all respect to the President, I concluded that the special reception he received in Britain had more to do with Britain and the British than it did with Jimmy Carter.

You have to begin with the fact that this is a sick and tired country, tired above all of its sickness and of its and its leaders' prolonged demonstration of inability to cure or substantially ameliorate the sickness. Carter's presence and his easy public manner—a manner developed during years of grueling work at the grit of politics—provided a diversion and a comforting assurance that a President of the United States cared enough about Britain to be there not only for London conferences but in the countryside and on national television. Beyond that he was a new figure, new in his own land and in Britain in a sense that British politicians can never be new by the time they attain national position. For Britons weary of familiar woes and of all too familiar public figgers, a talking head introduced as the new US President would have been a welcomed relief.

Short of a dictator's coup, which is unthinkable even in this time of strain, it would be impossible for a British politician to emerge from near-total obscurity and rise to the prime ministership in two years as Carter emerged and rose to the presidency. Whatever their social and professional origins, British aspirants for the peak must do their time in Parliament and in their constituencies. Thus there are no discernible alternatives to James Callaghan for Labour and to Margaret Thatcher for the Conservatives, as prospects for prime minister after the next general election. Mrs. Thatcher is new in the sense that she's the first woman to head a national party and to be a serious candidate for prime minister. But she's old hat in British politics; so old and so worn a figure, indeed, that some Labourites half believe, half hope against hope that enough voters have learned to dislike her over the years to give Labour a chance of victory despite its low standing at the moment. There's also a sneaky hunch that Britons aren't ready for a woman at the head of government, happy though most of them seem to be with the reign of Queen Elizabeth in her jubilee year. Saying this about women is not fashionable, however, and at the Conservative party headquarters in Smith Square a lady staffer reminded me that women comprise more than half the British electorate.

Here is the logical place for a repetitious list of the terrible things that Britons do to themselves. They begrudge and too often refuse to give a day's honest work for a day's pay. For trivial reasons or no detectable reason, they halt or reduce production with suicidal frequency in plants whose output is vital to the nation's survival. They choke themselves, or let their politicians and bureaucrats choke them, with a maniacal system and level of taxation. And so on and on and on. Who needs it? I don't and this journal's readers don't. So the rest of this space will be devoted to aspects of the London scene that make being there, even if one is condemned to live there, at least an occasional joy, and to an episode during my week in London that was quintessentially British.

During one of the continual traffic jams—the poorer the country gets, the more automobiles large and small seem to choke city streets—a glance from a taxi window captures a stringy gentleman in a black top hat, tail coat, stiff collar and bow tie, with a tall sign strapped to his shoulders and reading: LESS LUST BY LESS PROTEIN—MEATS, CHICKEN, EGGS. His is a losing crusade. Fleet Street friends say that the only financially sound newspapers are the excellent *Financial Times*, a sort of cross between the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*, and the sleazy dailies, notably *The Sun* and *The People*, which feature photographs of girls with bare bosoms, minimal center cover, and incredibly empty faces. The once mighty Beaverbrook Group (*Daily Express, Sunday Express, Evening Standard*) is in distress and praying for rescue by a processed foods magnate, Sir James Goldsmith, who is more respected for his millions than for himself in Fleet Street. One hears and reads about oil-rich Arabs all over the place, buying up country estates and English blondes and causing

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natives to mutter "Arab prices" when they are overcharged for ordinary goods. The only Arabs I saw were a morose fellow and his attendant, gloomily pacing the lobby of the Churchill Hotel, and a truly magnificient specimen in white robe and head-dress being removed from an ambulance and trundled into a Harley Street clinic. He stared at me from his stretcher and I could swear he was laughing at himself.

My account of the previously mentioned and quintessentially British episode must begin with a reference to the economic and social woes that so far have been minimized. The reference is not mine but that of Peter Jay, whose appointment as the next British ambassador to the US was announced the day after Carter left. Jay, aged 40, is Prime Minister Callaghan's son-in-law; a British television m.c.—"presenter," they call the breed in London—and economics editor of the London *Times*. In an essay just published in the US, Jay opens with the statement that "We in Britain are a confused and unhappy people" and writes near the end: "So we reach the depressing conclusion that the operation of free democracy appears to force governments into positions (the commitment to full employment) that prevent them from taking steps (fiscal and monetary restraint) that are necessary to arrest the menace (accelerating inflation) that threatens to undermine the condition (stable prosperity) on which political stability and therefore liberal democracy depend. In other words, democracy has itself by the tail and is eating itself up." What if anything he would substitute for democracy is not indicated. His worries about democracy were remarkably similar to Carter's.

This eyeful provides the only commentary needed upon Jay's reputation as a cogent and lively writer on economics. The episode of interest here has to do not with his abilities, which are widely touted in London, but with the manner of his appointment. Britain's new foreign secretary, David Owen, said it was his idea and his alone when he casually announced it to a group of Foreign Office correspondents. Asking British editors to forget that Jay is Prime Minister Callaghan's son-in-law was too much. "WHAT A JOB FOR THE BOY!," the pro-Labour *Daily Mirror* headlined in a typical Fleet Street reaction. The storm of scorn forced Callaghan into an uncharacteristic and unwise defensive posture the next day. After a briefing at 10 Downing Street by his normally cautious and respected press secretary, Tom McCaffrey, that day's afternoon papers and the next day's morning papers blossomed with bitter reports that the appointment was being excused with smears upon the incumbent ambassador in Washington, Sir Peter Ramsbotham. It was clear that he was being said somewhere in Whitehall—McCaffrey's daily briefings are not supposed to be identified as such—to be a stuffy dodo who didn't belong in Jimmy Carter's Washington. That was cruel nonsense: Ramsbotham has worked harder than most British ambassadors have to break out of formal diplomacy and make himself known throughout the United States, and he began to put himself on good terms with the Carterites before Carter was elected. McCaffrey denied that he'd put down Sir Peter in any personal way. Callaghan apologized twice in the House of Commons and once by telephone to Sir Peter for any harm done to that gentleman's reputation. Peter Jay accompanied his daddy-in-law and Foreign Secretary Owen to Washington several weeks ago and was a guest at Carter's state dinner for Callaghan. I suspect but don't know that Carter and some of his people had more to do than they care to acknowledge with putting Owen and Callaghan up to this stupid business.

John Osborne

A TNR interview
threatens Robert Vesco's future.

Costa Rica Imbroglio

The Setting: Costa Rica, for three decades the most stable and democratic of Latin American republics, consistently pro-US.

Time: The present. The political parties have just concluded their primary nominations for next year's presidential elections.

Cast of characters: (1) José Figueres, 70, three times president of his country (most recently 1971-74), architect of its constitution, president and elder statesman of his party, Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN). Figueres is an inventor, an agricultural and industrial entrepreneur whose schemes are devoted to the betterment of Costa Rica. His enterprises are consistently short of capital. He is an intellectual social democrat, blunt and outspoken, a defender and sometimes initiator of the activities of the CIA in Latin American affairs. (2) Daniel Oduber, 57, president of Costa Rica now serving the last year of his term. He was an early protege of Figueres, but their relation has cooled in recent years. (3) Luis Alberto Monge, 51, PLN leader in the national assembly and that party's nominee for the 1978 presidential election; a labor leader, populist social democrat and former editor of *Combate*, a left-wing journal financed by CIA funds passed through other organizations. (4) Robert Lee Vesco, 41, fugitive American financier who has been branded an international swindler by the Securities and Exchange Commission and is accused of looting $224 million from offshore investment funds. Vesco faces

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five indictments in the US, including an obstruction of justice charge stemming from a $200,000 cash contribution to Richard Nixon's 1972 campaign. Vesco now lives in isolation in the Costa Rican province of Guanacaste on the Pacific coast.

On April 16 *TNR* published an article on Costa Rica in its "South of the Border" series. The next week, April 23, we published an interview with José Figueres ("Don Pepe: On the CIA, Robert Vesco, Human Rights and Corruption."). In that *TNR* interview Figueres was quoted making several allegations that have raised a political brouhaha and have become issues in the current presidential campaign. President Daniel Oduber has responded to Don Pepe's charges in a letter to *TNR*.

In the interview, Figueres said he had encouraged the CIA's cultural and political participation in Central America, "at a time when social democrats in the region were threatened by communists on one side and the military on the other." He said the CIA, among other activities, had financed Monge's magazine *Combate*. Monge has denied this. He says the magazine's endowment came entirely from an organization called the International Institute of Labor Research, and cites an investigation allegedly exonerating *Combate* of alleged CIA involvement. But Oduber's letter to *TNR* confirms that the IILR was, in fact, a CIA conduit. Figueres says, "Well it is true there was an investigation—in quotation marks—and it was proved—in quotation marks—that the CIA was not involved. He [Monge] never knew where the money was coming from."

In the original interview, Figueres also charged, "Many members of the congress in this country as well as the current president were elected with Vesco's money. Oduber had a large part of his campaign paid for by Vesco." It is this charge that set off a major political imbroglio in Costa Rica.

Figueres's allegations stimulated waves of indignation and denials. Figueres's own PLN colleagues as well as members of the opposition demanded that he name the deputies who had received Vesco money, and produce any evidence he has. Oduber denies that he sought, was offered, or received any Vesco money. In the legislative assembly there were calls from all parties for a special commission to investigate Figueres's allegations and the financing of the 1974 elections. In a telephone interview from San José, President Oduber said that commission would probably be established, and on May 17 it was, with investigations to commence immediately. The opposition has demanded that if Oduber was elected with the aid of Vesco money, he should resign. In the furor, a petition calling for Vesco's expulsion from Costa Rica has been reissued; it was originally compiled two years ago and bears the signatures of about 100 prominent Costa Ricans, including former President José Joaquin Trejos, several former vice-presidents, cabinet ministers, deputies and many non-political figures. Rodrigo Carazo, presidential nominee of the United Opposition, has charged that the PLN is endorsed by a "fugitive from international justice."

The figure behind the current crisis is Robert Vesco, who arrived in Costa Rica in 1972 seeking a new base of operations. He met Figueres, then serving his third term as president. Figueres was interested in Vesco for at least two reasons. First he wanted to attract development capital and believed that with proper regulation offshore mutual funds might be a lucrative source of such capital. "Venezuela has its oil, Panama its canal and Bahamas its tourism," Figueres reportedly said. "What does Costa Rica have?" In turn, what Costa Rica could provide was just what Vesco needed, an extraterritorial financial district, a safe haven for flight capital complete with gambling and banking concessions; in effect, a state within a state.

Vesco also interested Figueres because Figueres's family enterprise, Sociedad Agricola Y Industrial San Cristobal, badly needed an infusion of cash in order to embark on a new low-cost prefabricated housing project. Vesco provided more than two million dollars. In return, he received a Costa Rican diplomatic passport as a financial adviser to the president. Legislation was prepared for "El Distrito financiero," several square miles of prime property near the San José airport for offshore mutual funds to set up their headquarters. But when the SEC named Vesco as the mastermind of "one of the largest securities frauds ever perpetrated," political support for the deal evaporated. Vesco has resided in his Costa Rican safe haven ever since, protected from indictments in this country.

In 1973, with Richard Nixon still President, the US Justice Department began efforts to extradite Vesco based on his indictment for attempted fraud and obstruction of justice in connection with the cash donation to Nixon. The charge—*attempted fraud*—was not covered by the 1922 US-Costa Rican extradition treaty, and removal was denied. Many in Costa Rica, including President Oduber, believe the US did not really want the extradition to succeed, because a trial of Vesco would have been dangerous for Nixon.

In March 1974, when all the top PLN leaders—President Figueres, President-elect Oduber and the party's assembly majority leader, Luis Alberto Monge—were conveniently out of the country, a new extradition law whizzed through the assembly. "The Vesco law," as it was quickly dubbed, was specifically crafted to protect the American fugitive and prevent any further extradition attempts. The law required the country seeking extradition not only to establish the traditional prime facie case, but also required what amounted to a full-scale trial in Costa Rica, with both sides presenting evidence and calling witnesses. The law confirmed to the world that Robert Vesco had friends in high places in Costa Rica.

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Vesco has consistently defended himself against public criticism in his adopted home by maintaining that he is a victim of political persecution in the United States. In a March 1973 television address Vesco told the people of Costa Rica, "They pretend that I have misused funds administered by the mutual funds, because I have tried, instead of continuing to finance large North American companies with money collected in underdeveloped countries, to invest those funds in property, companies and healthy securities in poor countries that need this help so much." Vesco's talk echoed the Figueres line very clearly, and it was shortly learned that Vesco's speechwriter for the occasion was none other than President Figueres himself.

José Figueres makes no apologies for the initial $2.15 million for San Cristobal, saying it was only a small part of what the Vesco group was expected to bring in development funds to his country. On May 10 (by telephone from San José), he estimated that Vesco's total investment in Costa Rica is $100 million. President Oduber also defends Vesco's investments—which he estimates at only about $30 million—saying, "Up to today, I know where the money is, roughly speaking."

Oduber's only reservations stem from the fact that Vesco has become a political factor in Costa Rica because of his alliance with Figueres. Speaking from his home on May 16, the President reiterated the sentiments of his letter. "It was a great mistake for the President of Costa Rica to be in partnership with one person who was so controversial. Figueres was the only one who had anything to say about Vesco's investments from 1972 to 1974. A large amount of Vesco's money went into Figueres's enterprises."

One of these enterprises, says Oduber, lent government bonds to the PLN in the 1974 campaign (see Oduber's letter). This is a new and serious charge. It is illegal for the President of Costa Rica to engage in any kind of partisan political activity, and Oduber's allegation clearly puts his predecessor outside the spirit of the law, however the money was channeled. For his part, Figueres categorically denies Oduber's charge, calling it "the worst lie in Daniel's letter." Since the interview was published, Don Pepe has reacted to the uproar against him in his own party by modifying his original statement only slightly. He now says that Vesco *companies* made contributions in 1974. "Nobody thought anything of taking their money," he said, "except when it came to the question of taking responsibility." There is a feeling in Costa Rica that the PLN is preparing to sacrifice the party patriarch in an effort to limit its losses.

Under Costa Rican law, Robert Vesco may not participate in the nation's politics. Notwithstanding the current cries of shocked outrage from the political establishment, Figueres's assertions that Vesco money has found its way into political campaigns merely confirms conventional wisdom in the country, and many believe that the ex-President's revelations were an essential national service. There are no laws effectively regulating political finance; there are no limits on the size of contributions and no requirements of public disclosure. Corporate giving is legal and normal. Robert Vesco has demonstrated no small skill at conduiting money. Tracing his Costa Rican political connections will be a difficult task for the investigative commission that now has been established by the legislative assembly.

If the honor of public men and a measure of respect for the nation are to be restored, the inquiry must be serious and complete. As a start, the commission might set Figueres's declarations against those of Oduber and determine the truth. On May 9 it was reported that Figueres is ready to document his charge with copies of Vesco checks totalling $350,000 used to transmit funds to various political campaigns. If that documentation exists, Figueres is being singled out unfairly by Oduber for relations with Vesco. Then the commission might pursue the common belief that $250,000 of Vesco money went to the campaign of Oduber's main 1974 opponent, Fernando Trejos Escalante, through the campaign's manager, Sigurd Koberg, who is now a deputy in the national assembly. Then there is the charge that Vesco contributed money through former Agriculture Minister Fernando Batalla in order to amend the constitution to permit Don Pepe to run again for president in 1978.

Robert Vesco is *the* political issue in Costa Rica today. The impression is inescapable that his money, laundered or otherwise, purchased the favor of politicians and thus his sanctuary from American justice. Until that impression is cleared up, Vesco, Vesco's enterprises and Vesco's connections deserve a close official scrutiny.

The current debate over Vesco will inevitably affect the ongoing presidential campaign. It also comes at a time when another attempt to extradite Vesco is under "very active, very intense" consideration at the US Justice Department. After lengthy prodding by then Ambassador Terence Todman and a new indictment in January 1976 (specifically citing $60 million in funds illegally diverted to Costa Rica), offered as proof that the US government is serious about extradition, the original Vesco law was revised last October. It is still more difficult than the average extradition procedure, but most of the unique and special obstacles designed to protect Vesco have been removed.

Robert Vesco will have fulfilled Costa Rica's five-year residency requirement for citizenship on June 28. Although the citizenship procedure can be complicated, things have been made to move quickly for Vesco in the past, and extradition becomes more difficult once the factor of citizenship is added in.

In the context of the presidential campaign, any US action will be interpreted as aiding opposition candidate

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Letter from the President of Costa Rica

To the editors:

In reference to your article "Don Pepe: On the CIA, Robert Vesco, human rights and corruption," published in *The New Republic* on April 23, 1977, I would like to make the following remarks:

As members of the same party, Don José Figueres and I worked together for many years, starting in 1944. But later we drifted apart due to a growing difference in basic concepts on government. During recent years Don Pepe's ideas have changed substantially, and the great inspiration he provided in the early stages of his public life has been transformed into a constant source of embarrassment and tension. Nevertheless we respect him and try in many ways, as in a family, to avoid direct confrontation with him.

We did not object to the arrival of Mr. Vesco and his friends to Costa Rica. We have had similar cases before, and the fact that the final property of his funds was being decided in different courts throughout the world did not necessarily imply that the funds in our country would be improperly utilized. What we objected to was that the President of this country should enter into association with the Vesco Group. This contradicted a clear tradition in Costa Rica which we respect, and Don Pepe's decision to enter into a business venture with Mr. Vesco created problems for him, for the Vesco Group and for the country. It caused deep tension between Don Pepe's group and ours.

Don Pepe organized many corporations which were partly capitalized by money coming from the OIS Funds. One of these corporations lent the party some money during my campaign. The loan was repaid as soon as we realized that the lending company was formed with monies that came in part from OIS Funds.

Costa Ricans are not all cowards as Don Pepe says: It is simply that he has a concept of honesty which differs from theirs. He calls cowards those who do not agree with his ideas and actions, and this form of expression is typical of his temperament recently. I disagreed with him during his last Government on many matters. Those whom he calls cowards are simply people that cannot accept certain of his ideas which are contrary to accepted national principles.

Graft and corruption have always existed in Costa Rica and in all other countries. There are governments that try to stop it, and governments that ride on it in order to please political and financial friends. A great effort has been made by my Government to control it. We have had to stop projects that had been started before our administration began, due to the fact that we considered them badly designed or inflated in cost because of excessive profits for promoters and middlemen. All this is known by public officials and political groups in the country.

Don Pepe told you that he tried his best to get the CIA involved in the politics of Central America. This is really shocking news for me and for many of his immediate collaborators.

In this line of thought he said that with CIA help we financed in Costa Rica a center for democratic leadership and a social democratic magazine, which was edited by Luis Alberto Monge, the presidential candidate of the National Liberation Party for the 1978 election.

Indeed, as it was disclosed by *Ramparts* Magazine, the Central Intelligence Agency had financed and penetrated several liberal organizations, such as the International Institute of Labour Research. At the time we formed the Institute for Political Education, with the collaboration of other democratic leftist parties of Latin America, we had not and could not have any reason to suspect that Mr. Norman Thomas and the American Socialist Party, to which the IILR was affiliated, had been penetrated to this extent. We still believe that Mr. Norman Thomas and the IILR were taken advantage of in their good will, and we strongly believe in the honesty and dedication of that great apostle of democracy.

As soon as we discovered that something was irregular in the founding of the Institute for Political Education, we decided to close it, and it remained closed for several years until it was reorganized as the Center for Democratic Studies for Latin America (DEDAL); this time it was financed by a West German Foundation: the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

Don Pepe likes to use spectacular language in order to shock his listeners without due regard to the reactions of those who must think that it is a serious expression of his thought. The statements he made on the CIA, Cuba and Chile follow this pattern. It may be that he now thinks along these lines. But I am sure that this was not his line of thought when those events took place.

The kind of differences that now exist between Don Pepe and our group are frequent within democratic parties all over the world. No matter what his stand may be now, I am happy to recognize that he has done much for the country, for the Hemisphere and for democracy. The fact that he has abandoned or changed some of his principles in recent years fortunately does not change the historic image he created as a leader in Latin America.

I avail myself of this opportunity to assure you of my highest esteem and consideration.

Sincerely,
Daniel Oduber

Rodrigo Carazo, who has repeatedly declared Vesco a menace to the republic. Carazo has long maintained that Vesco contributed to the PLN in 1974, and says that Vesco's stay in Costa Rica has been accomplished only by stretching the law. There is no evidence on the record that PLN nominee Monge has Vesco connections, and the price of defending national policy on Vesco may ultimately become too high for the PLN during the campaign. But Carazo has the strongest anti-Vesco connections and he will profit by the

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escalation of publicity.

When the initial outcry arose over José Figueres's statements in *The New Republic*, the former president suggested that he might have been misunderstood or taken seriously when he was speaking in jest. But the original transcripts have been independently verified by two Costa Rican journalists. In their view, Don Pepe was not joking, not this time anyway.

Robert Vesco has become a national liability. He may also be a very specific liability for many politicians—how many perhaps only he knows. The days ahead will be a time for turning over hole cards in Costa Rica.

Ken Bode

This bomber is a bummer.

Dump the B-1

A couple of years ago the *New Yorker* ran a cartoon depicting a general seated at a Pentagon conference table asking several colleagues, "Do you ever have one of those days when no deterrent seems adequate?" The B-1 bomber was conceived on one of those days back in the late '60s and has been stirring controversy ever since, barely surviving a series of congressional votes. Candidate Jimmy Carter called the plane "exotic" and "wasteful" and promised to put a stop to it as soon as he became President. In February, President Carter decided to include funds for five B-1s in his budget for fiscal year 1978. He promised a final decision on the plane when he received a National Security Council study due at the end of May.

The predecessors of the B-1, the B-58 and the B-70, were high-altitude supersonic strategic bombers rudely made obsolete when the Russians deployed surface-to-air missile defenses that made high-flying bombers sitting ducks. Determined to have a supersonic bomber, the Air Force decided it needed one that could fly faster than the speed of sound at low altitudes, where Soviet air defenses are more "porous" because of technical problems in tracking aircraft that essentially blend into the landscape. Somewhere along the line, the Air Force decided the plane really didn't have to fly supersonically to elude low-level air defenses, and reduced its planned top speed at low altitude from Mach 1.2 (nearly 900 mph) to Mach 0.85 (less than 650 mph). The B-1's top speed of Mach 1.6 at high altitudes (cut from Mach 2.2) is a superfluous luxury, as even some of its defenders concede. Since the plane will have to fly subsonically to penetrate Russian defenses, its supersonic speed can be used only outside the Soviet Union, where it is unnecessary. Herbert Scoville, former deputy director of the CIA and now assistant director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, criticizes the B-1 as nothing more than a "subsonic bomber with a short supersonic dash capability at high altitudes" and says the supersonic feature makes the B-1 a worse plane: "If the plane is to fly supersonically the engines cannot be designed optimally for subsonic flight. . . . Military effectiveness has been sacrificed to the desire by the Air Force to fly faster." John F. McCarthy, a former vice president of North American Rockwell (now Rockwell International, one of the main contractors for the B-1) and a supporter of the plane, admits the "high-speed capability is not central to the bomber's role" and estimates its elimination at the outset could have reduced the cost of the B-1 by 16 percent. Unfortunately, it's too late to do anything about it now.

The B-1's speed isn't all that has been reduced; in fact, the plane meets almost none of its original standards. Its intended range has been cut drastically, from 10,000 miles to 6100—which means it could not fly a mission from the United States to a target in the Soviet Union and return to a base in Europe without refueling, even if it were flown subsonically. Flying part of the mission at supersonic speeds would shorten the range even more. Worse, the Air Force says the bomber's range may turn out to be only about 4300 miles, less than half the original goal. By contrast, the B-52—which the B-1 is designed to replace—has been flown 12,500 miles without refueling (though not with the payload it would carry on a strategic mission). The B-1's payload has been cut in half and the number of short-range attack missiles (SRAMs) it will carry has been reduced by a fourth. Its vaunted takeoff distance has tripled, and its weight has increased, making it more vulnerable to destruction on the ground. The B-1's quick takeoff was supposed to be one of its biggest advantages over the B-52, but a recent study by the Brookings Institution shows that a B-52 equipped with rocket-assisted takeoff (RATO) would get off the ground and safely away from its base almost as quickly as a B-1.

The innocent might expect such reduced performance expectations to be accompanied by corresponding cuts in costs, but the opposite is true. The B-1's price has climbed even more sharply than its performance standards have fallen. Originally estimated at $35 million to $40 million per plane, the cost now is figured by the GAO at up to $117 million—an increase of nearly 200 percent in eight years. Senator Proxmire points out that relaxing the B-1's performance standards has helped to camouflage its huge cost increases: one can only imagine what the price of the plane might be if it were built to its original specifications—if indeed it could be at all.

As it is, the B-1, if built, will be the most expensive weapons system ever purchased. Building a fleet of 150 B-1s (the Air Force wanted 244, but the *Washington Star* reports it is now willing to settle for fewer) would cost more than $17 billion. Equipping the plane with missiles, operating and maintaining the fleet, and producing a new wide-bodied tanker for refueling the bomber in flight will bring the cost to well above $90

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The B-1 Sideshow

The elaborate campaign on behalf of the B-1 has puttered along for years, reaching an impressive full throttle wherever Congress has approached a crucial vote. Composed in roughly equal parts of corporate favors, strong-arming and old-fashioned smears, it has included occasional elements of low comedy. The clumsiness and insensitivity of the plane's supporters may be one reason it has had such a hard time getting into production: if there ever was a textbook case of how not to lobby for a military project, this one is it.

The B-1's biggest booster is Rockwell International, which stands to make a lot of money as the main contractor for the project. When Rockwell got the B-1 contract in 1970, after some rather lean years, Rockwell Chairman Willard Rockwell, Jr., said with relief, "We knew that as a business we had just one more chance—the B-1." The company has gone to great lengths to keep the project alive. Last year a congressional investigation revealed that Rockwell had entertained nearly 100 different Pentagon officials at its hunting retreat in eastern Maryland. Malcolm Currie, head of Pentagon research and member of a committee assigned to review the B-1, got a "severe reprimand" from Secretary Rumsfeld and was fined a month's pay ($3200) for accepting a trip to a Rockwell resort in the Bahamas. Besides running magazine and newspaper ads, distributing films, and lobbying actively in Congress, Rockwell also has urged its employees to write Congress in support of the B-1, an effort that has had mixed results. Some workers wrote to criticize the plane and to complain about Rockwell's tactics. One man wrote, "This letter is being written on Rockwell Inter. time. Dealing with the B-1, I am against it. And since Rockwell is paying me to write this letter and send it here it is." One woman called the B-1 a "disaster" and said, "All employees should feel the same way, because if not they are insane."

The B-1 also enjoys the frenzied support of a conservative group with the official-sounding name of American Security Council. (Some might take that name as a deliberate attempt to confuse the organization in the public's mind with the President's National Security Council.) The ASC's principal motif is shrill denunciation of the "massive, highly organized and well-financed campaign" against the B-1 (in fact, it is almost pathetically underfinanced) and dark suggestions that its opponents are actually Reds. One issue of ASC's *Washington Report* ran the headline "The Battle to Stop the B-1" under a photograph of Leonid Brezhnev, surrounded by articles and headlines from the *Daily World*, the *Moscow News*, and the Russian weekly *New Times*—and, displayed prominently, the masthead of the National Campaign to Stop the B-1 Bomber. The accompanying article begins, "Foremost among the groups oposing the B-1 bomber is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and other Communist parties." Rockwell also has jumped into the smear campaign, at one point saying that Senator John Culver's efforts to halt production of the B-1 were furthering the aims of the USSR. A Rockwell vice president has said the American Friends Service Committee and Clergy and Laity Concerned, two groups opposing the B-1, are funded by the USSR, and is being sued for libel by the Thomas Merton Center in Philadelphia, for accusing it of being Communist. So far neither Rockwell nor the ASC has called Maxwell Taylor a Communist.

The most interesting element so far in the pro-B-1 campaivn was a recent episode of "The Six Million Dollar Man," a very popular television show about a man named Steve Austin who enjoys various superhuman powers. This episode was a typically far-fetched yarn about an East German scientist trying to sabotage a B-1 test flight to make it look as if the plane was badly flawed, and thus induce the government to give it up. (Universal Studios, which has the rights to the script, refused to provide me a copy even after I got the author's permission.) Coincidentally, the episode was broadcast only a week before President Carter was expected to make his decision (ultimately delayed) on the B-1. In any case, the hero foiled the plot and saved the plane. Unfortunately for Rockwell, the final decision on the B-1 doesn't rest with Steve Austin.

billion over the next three decades.

The B-1 has found a lot of natural enemies in Congress and among liberals. But it has provoked remarkable opposition among many military men and civilian defense experts. A year ago a group of former government officials, including McGeorge Bundy, Clark Clifford and Townsend Hoopes, issued a simple statement: "The tens of billions of dollars required to build and operate the B-1 bomber are not warranted by any contribution to our security which it might make." Ernest Fitzgerald, the man who revealed the C-5A cost overruns, says the B-1 was not designed solely for the purpose for which it is now intended. Fitzgerald says that as Deputy Assistant Undersecretary of the Air Force in the late 1960s, he was briefed about a study on the best design for a manned bomber to penetrate the Soviet Union with atomic weapons, and that the design looked very different from the B-1. He says the B-1 was a Vietnam-era compromise intended also to carry large payloads of non-nuclear bombs. The B-1, in Fitzgerald's view, may be intended by the Air Force mainly for use in future Vietnams: "It will do a very good job of raining down bombs on the cannibals—at a very high cost."

Probably the most unexpected critic of the B-1 is former Joint Chiefs' chairman Maxwell Taylor, who last year wrote Senator John Culver, "I am unable to support the B-1 program because of its cost and the absence of convincing evidence of its essentiality." Sobering words from a general who calls himself "an unregenerate 'hawk'," but they have had no effect on the Air Force's heady infatuation with the plane.

The most persuasive criticism of the B-1 is that a manned penetration bomber is useless in the missile

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age. The latest in missile technology, the cruise missile, is essentially a pilotless airplane that is practically invulnerable to present Soviet air defenses. It probably even is capable of eluding a possible Russian advance—airborne interceptors with "look-down, shoot-down" capability—that would seriously endanger the B-1. In the Brookings study mentioned above, Alton Quanbeck and Archie Wood recommended the use of cruise missiles launched from a "standoff bomber"—a plane loitering just outside the perimeter of Russian air defenses—as a more effective and less expensive way than the B-1 of destroying targets inside the Soviet Union. The standoff bomber could be a B-52, a modified tanker or airliner, or a newly developed plane—little more is required than good endurance, quick takeoff speed, and the size to carry a large number of missiles. The B-1's poor range and small size make it a poor candidate even for this subsidiary role. Maxwell Taylor endorses the standoff bomber-cruise missile approach, as does retired Admiral Gene LaRocque (now head of the Center for Defense Information), who calls the manned penetration bomber "an expensive and inefficient anachronism."

The last-ditch defense of the B-1 is that it can be used as a "bargaining chip" in the Salt II talks. But it is hard to imagine the Soviets giving up anything in exchange for a plane with all the limitations of the B-1. In all, the B-1's story is reminiscent of what the Caterpillar said of Alice's poem: "It is wrong from beginning to end." Jimmy Carter chose as his Secretary of Defense a man who favors the B-1—the same Harold Brown, incidentally, who as Secretary of the Air Force wanted to fire Ernest Fitzgerald for exposing the cost overruns on the C-5A. But the President could find no better opportunity than the B-1 to show that he, not the generals in the Pentagon, is in charge of his administration's policies on national defense. He should kill it off once and for all.

Stephen Chapman

Stephen Chapman is a Washington writer.

You Gotta Have a Gimmick.

Blue-collar Caucus

One of the toughest problems facing any congressman, especially a new one, is getting people to pay attention to him. His party will give him training in putting out press releases, newsletters and TV tapes, but no one has perfected a formula for ensuring that reporters and editors will print or air the product, or that constituents will give it a moment's notice. Eloquence helps some individual members of Congress make an early splash, as it did with Barbara Jordan. A Barry Goldwater, Jr. or a Jack Kemp has name recognition to trade on—his own or someone else's. Millicent Fenwick made a hit right away by being rich, witty and smart, and by smoking a pipe. Father Robert Drinan kept his collar on. Paul McCloskey picked fights with Nixon and Michael Harrington took on the CIA. Les Aspin got into the papers as a freshman by knowing the Pentagon cold and by having learned the art of generating publicity at the feet of Senator William Proxmire.

But without something special—a name, a prop, a gimmick, an issue or (almost unheard of) extraordinary brains or courage—it usually takes a congressman seven, eight, even nine terms of slogging through the seniority system to win a chairmanship, collect some power and make it onto the network news, honorably at least. By these standards, the performance of Representative Edward Beard of Rhode Island has been remarkable. Just into his second term in the House, Beard has been on both the CBS Evening News and the NBC Nightly News, and his press secretary's scrapbooks record that more than 50 newspapers around the country, from Bangor, Maine, to Billings, Montana, have carried stories about his brainchild, the congressional Blue-Collar Caucus.

Beard has had an unusual political career. He was assistant foreman for maintenance painters at the Rhode Island School of Design before and during his term in the state house of representatives. He then took on and defeated Rhode Island's state Democratic party establishment in 1974 to win his seat in Congress. During his first term, he developed a distinctive variation on the gimmick-prop technique to get attention from his colleagues and constituents. He hung a housepainter's brush next to his congressional office door where other members display their states' Great Seals, and he took to carrying around small paintbrushes to hand out as momentos. He bestowed one of these upon Jimmy Carter during the 1976 campaign.

Beard got his inspiration for the Blue-collar Caucus on March 5 of this year during President Carter's radio call-in show with Walter Cronkite. It came during Carter's exchange with Mrs. Ester Thomas of Villanova, Pennsylvania, who asked, "How can we, as middle-class earners, expect legislation or reforms that would remove tax loopholes the rich or affluent use as deductions, when all laws and legislation are made by the rich? There are no poor people, no poor or no lower-class wage-earners in either the House or the Senate." The President used the question as an opportunity to restate his campaign promise to reform the nation's tax system, which, he observed anew, is "a disgrace." By the end of September, Carter promised, "we will propose . . . in a highly publicized way basic reforms in the income tax structure."

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Walter Cronkite brought the President back to Mrs. Thomas's point about the class structure of Congress. The President observed that "once a congressman is in office, with a fairly substantial salary, [he is] obviously in the upper class. So is a President, by the way. I guess, so is an anchorman for CBS." Public officials can keep in touch with their constituencies if they try, however, the President continued, and must do so, in fact, during re-election campaigns. He returned to taxes, then to reiterate his 1976 theme that "those who are powerful and who are influential and who can hire lobbyists or who can pay their own private lawyer" can have the laws written their way, whereas "the average American family with $10,000, $15,000, sometimes $25,000 has to depend on "somebody like the President" to represent his best interest.

After the program, Beard consulted biographies of his congressional colleagues and discovered that Mrs. Thomas had a point. More than half the members, he said, were lawyers, and most of the other half came from other professional backgrounds. Beard found 16 members with what he said were blue-collar backgrounds. He contacted them. Thirteen, some dredging rather deep into the past, discovered working-class origins and joined Beard's caucus. Its unveiling on April 5 was a huge media event, which NBC reported on the evening news.

There seems little question that, as Mrs. Thomas, President Carter and Mr. Beard all tell us, the average American family is under-represented in Washington. It is not that congressmen or officials of the Executive Branch hold ordinary Americans in contempt or purposely exclude them from their minds. It is simply that ordinary Americans are not part of the life of official, policy making Washington. A publication of the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade makes the point almost as a boast: "While recession was taking its toll around the nation, metro Washington residents had a free ride," with an unemployment rate 30 percent below the national average. The reason, of course, is that Washington lives off the federal government, which grows faster, if anything, when times are bad in the productive sectors of the economy. Of the 10 biggest metropolitan areas in the country, Government City consistently shows the highest per capita income. In 1975, Washington was second only to Long Island in household income, with $19,777. The average American household took in $13,720.

The averages hardly tell the full story of unrepresentative, unproductive prosperity in Washington. Tourists, if they wanted to see how things really work here, would skip the lines and the White House and the Iwo Jima Memorial and drive around Spring Valley, Potomac, Chevy Chase, Cleveland Park and McLean, to visit where official Washington lives, block upon block, in housing that starts at $100,000, surrounded by attendant consultants, aides, lobbyists, lawyers and media commentators. These folks do not consciously scorn the average American; they are simply too busy buying Mercedes 450 SLs and financing private school educations to think about him. Even the leaders of the American trade union movement may find it difficult to concentrate fulltime on blue-collar concerns, golfing at Burning Tree Country Club and hobnobbing with Rockefellers, as some of them do.

Jimmy Carter, the populist, anti-Washington candidate for President, promised to begin changing all this. He sent a thrill through some, and shivers through others, when he declared in Madison Square Garden last summer that "too many have had to suffer at the hands of a political and economic elite who have shaped decisions and never had to account for mistakes nor to suffer from injustice." The elites never stand in line looking for jobs, never do without clothing or food, he said, they send their kids to private schools, "and when the bureaucracy is bloated and confused, the powerful always manage to discover and occupy niches of special influence and privilege." It sounded like a call for class upheaval, but Carter quickly cleared things up by lunching at '21' in New York City with the captains of American business and reassuring them of his fiscal responsibility. Democrats in Congress charge that Carter, whose first priority is a balanced budget by 1981, has not stopped appeasing business, and the AFL-CIO is almost in open rebellion against him.

Carter *has* acted symbolically to diminish the atmosphere of luxury which usually prevails around the White House. He has ordered top officials to stop riding in black Lincoln Continentals and to start using green Ford LTDs. He has cut back sharply the number of officials entitled to be driven to work in government limousines. But he also approved pay raises large enough to pay for each of them to buy a new car to drive to work. Carter may want to make a populist presidency, after all, but it will be as hard for a camel to crawl through the eye of a needle as for some of his 35-year-old aides making $50,000 a year to keep their minds on the plight of the average American.

So, there is clearly a need for somebody to speak for the common man in Washington. Reading the newspapers, you might conclude that Congressman Beard's Blue-collar Caucus offers some hope that the need will be fulfilled. Alas, it appears not. For one thing, few of the caucus's members are what they claim to be—genuine products of the working class. Paul Simon of Illinois was a publisher before he came to Congress. Dale Kildee of Michigan once had a part-time job as an electrician, but taught school before he went into politics. John L. Burton of California pays dues to the bartender's union, but also is a lawyer. Gus Yatron boxed professionally in college, then became a businessman. John Dent, also from Pennsylvania, was in the rubber workers union once, but later became a coal executive and has been in politics since 1934.

Beard genuinely earned only $9000 as a painter

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before coming to Congress, but now he is learning, like many congressmen, how to live on $57,500 and still not make ends meet. In mid-April, he was the beneficiary of a $15-a-head fundraising testimonial, proceeds from which went into his pocket. About 1200 people attended the dinner, at which the Cypriot ambassador was chief speaker. When a fuss was made in Providence newspapers, Beard refused to say how much money he had collected, declared the whole matter part of his private life, not his political life, and said, "anyone who doesn't like it can go to hell." Eventually, though, he announced he would give the money back.

Since announcing its existence, the Blue-collar Caucus has convened just once for a "policy meeting." That was on May 3, when members huddled for a few moments at the back of a congressional hearing room and agreed they could not agree on a common position on President Carter's package. Then the caucus held a press conference—which made the CBS evening news—at which individual members said they opposed Carter's gasoline tax. The caucus has taken no position on any other issue. It is preparing no research documents. Its only staff member, in fact, is Beard's press secretary, and his only duties seem to be those of calling press conferences and collecting press clippings. The Blue-collar Caucus so far is another congressional publicity gimmick, albeit a successful and imaginative one. The average American still awaits a true spokesman in Washington, though with a family income of only $13,700 a year he's probably got more urgent things to be worried about. For that matter, so does Washington.

Morton Kondracke

Foreign Service posts
still go to non-professionals.

The Amateur Hour

President Carter's dillomatic team, now that the key spots at home and abroad have been filled, leaves us wondering, in many cases, "why not the best?" At best, the men and women picked to run the State Department, associated agencies and our embassies abroad are a mixed bag. This is a shame because, given his ostensible freedom from political commitments, Carter had an extraordinary opportunity to make it all shine. But while Carter has made improvements in some areas of the diplomatic apparatus, errors of the past have been repeated and compounded in others, and the new administration has added its own mistakes.

The cabinet and sub-cabinet appointments have been uneven. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in the last four months has become as much of a globe-trotter as Henry Kissinger, though a less flashy one. He does not give the impression of truly developing into the President's principal adviser on foreign policy. The big concepts, such as they are, are the province of the White House, where Carter and his National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski produce most of the heavy thinking. Vice President Mondale's role in policy making is increasing, and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and CIA Director Stansfield Turner are a growing influence in the Oval Office. United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young retains his freedom of speech, undisturbed by the "corrections" that the State Department frequently issues after his statements. Those who know him well are convinced that Young's behavior is the product of cold political calculations rather than visceral outbursts.

So despite Carter's initial assurances about Vance's impact on decision making, the State Department, once more, acts primarily as a support service organization. The career people, needless to say, are dispirited. This is not only because they are again in the farm league of Washington politics, but also because Carter is showing a disturbing penchant for political appointments both in the State Department and for the embassies abroad, despite his campaign commitments to diplomatic professionalism.

With a relatively weak Secretary of State (and there hasn't been a strong one since Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles), the department has to function with a Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, whose foreign affairs experience is limited. The truly strong man in the department is Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Philip Habib, the ranking career official in the building and a holdover from the Kissinger era. But whereas all the Assistant Secretaries of State and officials of equivalent rank under Kissinger (with three exceptions) were career Foreign Service officers, seven of these posts are now in the hands of outsiders. Some of them are quite talented, but the career officers feel blocked from advancement.

There is probably too much learning on the job in most of these top slots, clearly at the expense of efficiency. A good example is the performance of the department's spokesman, Hodding Carter III (Assistant Secretary of State for public affairs), when it comes to the task of briefing newspapermen on day-to-day developments in foreign policy. Carter (no kin to the President) has been less than successful in explaining the administration's foreign policy meanderings. Often he is pre-empted by the White House on major developments. An impressive addition to the professional roster, on the other hand, is Assistant Secretary for inter-American affairs Terence A. Todman, a veteran diplomat.

At the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

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(responsible, among other things, for SALT negotiations with the Soviets), Paul Warnke is a considerable improvement over his predecessor, although he is politically vulnerable to attacks from the right. At the United States Information Agency, John F. Reinhardt, a career Foreign Service officer who was Kissinger's Assistant Secretary for public affairs, is turning into an outstanding director, particularly compared to the Nixon political hack he replaced.

What troubles the career people the most is that Carter has fallen into the bad habit of choosing political appointees as ambassadors, a time-dishonored practice he had promised to abandon in favor of professionalism. The Foreign Service does not, of course, dispute the fact that there are first-rate outsiders who should be brought into diplomacy—many non-professionals have become superb ambassadors. In fact, the foreign service believes that such men can strengthen the overall operation. What disturbs the career officers, however, is that despite some excellent non-professional choices for chiefs of missions, Carter is maintaining the old system of political spoils. Some of the men he has named simply do not meet the minimal criteria for ambassadorships.

The American Foreign Service Association takes the view that no more than 10 percent of all ambassadors should be non-career, and no more than 15 percent in any given geographic area. It is now clear that the share under Carter will be around 30 percent. It was 38 percent under Ford and 32 percent under Nixon. Interestingly, the worse offenders were Roosevelt, who had 44 percent non-career chiefs of missions, and Kennedy, who had 42 percent.

Traditionally, Latin America and Europe have been the preserves of ambassadors Carter characterized last year as the "fat, bloated, ignorant, rich, major contributor to a Presidential campaign." Under Ford, the percentage of political ambassadors in Latin America and the Caribbean was a stunning 62 percent; in Europe it was 48 percent. Eighty percent of Ford's envoys to international organizations (NATO, OAS, etc.) were non-career.

It appears now that Latin America and Europe will retain this distinction under Carter. Patrick Lucey, the governor of Wisconsin already has been named ambassador to Mexico where, in the past, career officers were normally assigned. The grapevine has it that political appointees will go to Argentina (which had a political ambassador under the Republicans) as well as Chile, Colombia and Uruguay. Most Central American and Caribbean posts will likewise be given to non-professionals.

In Europe, there is little quantitative improvement in the making. London, as usual, went to a political appointee, Yale's Kingman Brewster. Rome, which had a Nixon politician as ambassador, received Columbia University professor Richard Gardner, a good choice. The ambassador to Ireland is William Shannon, a *New York Times* editorial writer, likewise a highly imaginative selection. None of these appointments bother the Foreign Service which, by the same token, has no objections to former Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield in Japan, UAW chief Leonard Woodcock in Peking, and Princeton's Robert Goheen in New Delhi.

The success of these ambassadors in sensitive capitals may be, to an important extent, a question of local perceptions. The Japanese, who constantly worry about the American defense commitments in Asia, may be uncomfortable with Mansfield's advocacy of a reduced US presence abroad, particularly at a time when Carter is considering pulling some troops out of South Korea. Woodcock's support of detente with the Soviet Union and his special standing in Hanoi, where the Russians seem to have gained the upper hand politically over the Chinese, may raise some hackles in Peking. Goheen will have the opportunity of rebuilding US relations with India now that Indira Ghandi has vanished from the scene. Brewster in London may or may not please some Americans academics, but the reality is that Anglo-American relations work on the presidential level in Washington. Gardner, an international law expert, should provide sound advice to Carter on the gyrations of Italian "Eurocommunism" and the US attitude toward it.

The serious objections of the professional Foreign Service are reserved for appointments like those of Ohio politicians (and early Carter supporters) Marvin Warner to Switzerland and Milton Wolf to Austria. Warner is displacing Nathaniel Davis, a first-rate career officer. The American Foreign Service Association has formally protested these appointments. It also urged the administration not to send the Georgians Anne Cox Chambers to Belgium and Philip Alston to Australia. Both were major campaign contributors.

Another striking case of political favoritism is Carter's apparent decision (not yet announced as of this writing) to name former South Carolina Governor John C. West as ambassador to Saudi Arabia, one of the most crucial diplomatic posts. West, with no known experience in foreign affairs, would replace William Porter, an excellent envoy who has served in a half-dozen critical assignments around the world.

Carter's great innovation was to set up a special screening commission, headed by Florida Governor Reuben Askew and including such luminaries as Averell Harriman, to pass on nominations of non-career ambassadors. The commission, however, is turning into a disappointment. The American Foreign Service Association, for instance, believes that the panel should include former career ambassadors, which it does not, and that it also should screen professional diplomats picked for ambassadorships if the whole system is to make any sense. But Carter has rejected this approach.

It does not follow, of course, that *all* career

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appointments are good. Arthur Hartman, the holdover Assistant Secretary of State for European affairs, clearly is a fine choice for Paris. So is Laurence Eagleburger for Yugoslavia, after his service as Deputy Undersecretary of State under Kissinger. James Lowenstein, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the European bureau, probably deserves a bigger post than Luxembourg, but at least his appointment ends the practice of sending politicians there. Alfred Atherton, the Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East, will be an excellent ambassador to Egypt if the reports of this choice turn out to be true.

But there are serious doubts about the wisdom of sending W. Tapley Bennett, a Georgian, to be ambassador to NATO. Bennett's main contribution to history is his role in convincing Lyndon Johnson to intervene militarily in the civil war in the Dominican Republic (where Bennett was ambassador) in 1965. He was also a friendly ambassador in Greece and Portugal under the dictatorships there.

There has been criticism of Carter for naming William Sullivan as ambassador to Iran because of his deep involvement with the "secret war" in Laos when he served there, and his role as the highly dedicated head of the Vietnam Task Force in the Nixon administration. Sullivan, whose latest ambassadorial post was in the Philippines, is regarded by critics as a "military" type of ambassador. The Shah may find him sympathetic to his policy of arming Iran to the teeth.

Individual appointments, particularly of the career diplomats, are a matter of opinion. But it *is* distressing that President Carter appears to be applying strange criteria in his foreign policy appointments, missing the chance of making American diplomacy the best ever.

Tad Szulc

Anatomy of Health Care Costs: IV

The Great Hospital War

by Eliot Marshall

Boston may not think of itself as living in the future, but in a sense it does. Like New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and other cities that have survived into old age, Boston has experienced problems that younger cities haven't had. One of the nagging problems of Boston's old age is the cost of keeping itself in good health.

Boston's condition is acute in several respects: the quality of its medical care is excellent, the cost of care is higher than the national standard and its general economic health is worse than average. Boston supports some of the best hospitals in the world, public and private, but it cannot continue to support them in the style to which they are accustomed. Private insurance rates are stiff. Massachusetts voters will not let taxes be raised. The state has begun to cut back its subsidy to public health care and, at the same time, but with less success, is attempting to restrict the growth of private health projects. A kind of tribal war has broken out among doctors and hospitals competing for the restricted flow of cash.

Political allegiances are important in the hospital war because the normal rules of competitive enterprise do not apply. Hospitals are not subject to the play of supply and demand in the marketplace, and they are not subject to effective government control. Boston—like other parts of the country, including Florida, Washington, DC and Southern California—already has more hospitals than it needs. Yet private hospitals continue to expand and multiply, often with government financing and always with the expectation of revenues from government health programs. Meanwhile, in Boston, public hospitals supplying necessary services are getting squeezed.

A skirmish was in progress when I visited Boston in April. A raiding party from the Lahey Clinic, a private foundation with an excellent reputation and an international clientele, was trying to assert dominion in a new territory, against the wishes of the indigenous medical population. Lahey intends to move out of downtown Boston to a fresh pasture in the suburbs at the intersection of Route 93, the western road to New Hampshire, and Route 128, a highway that encircles the city. It is a well-chosen spot; a supermarket strategist couldn't have done better. But Lahey was ambushed enroute.

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The first to object to Lahey's move were the government hospital planners, the people who enforce the rule that no hospital can be built without proof that it is needed. The planners have been in power since the early '70s; Massachusetts was one of the first states to pass a "certificate of need" law for hospitals. In 1974, the US Congress passed a law (PL 93-641) requiring all states to do likewise. One of the leading sponsors of this law was Senator Edward Kennedy. Given the lack of competition in the health field and the lavish system of reimbursement for hospital expenses, it is almost impossible to control wasteful spending. Short of rewriting the entire system of hospital financing, which officials were not prepared to do, the only solution was to control big chunks of the health business. So planners now control spending on costly pieces of equipment like the CAT scanner (See "CAT Fever," *TNR*, April 16) and restrict hospital construction. Every sponsor must prove that a project is needed. This serves at least to discourage the faint-hearted.

The planners define the standard of "need." Until recently, meeting the standard was largely a matter of chanting the proper jargon. In the last two years, however, Massachusetts has become quite critical of new projects. Its health costs are 23 percent higher than the national average, and industries that might settle in the state are scared off when they consider what it would cost to buy employees' insurance. The planners have forced the closing and merging of several hospitals that seemed superfluous, but they could not stop the project in dispute this spring, the Lahey Clinic hospital. Lahey got its certificate of need in 1972, in the easy days, though it didn't prepare to begin construction until this past winter. The planners made a noble attempt to stop it in December, but in the end they succumbed.

After the planners had withdrawn, a group of suburban doctors and hospitals—the competition—put up a second barricade. Although they don't describe it this way, they are fighting for their own livelihoods. They know that if Lahey is built it will draw clients from their neighborhood and be bad for business. These people spotted a technical flaw in the procedure by which Lahey won its fight with the planners, and they filed suit to reverse that victory. This successfully got Lahey snarled in the bureaucracy.

My visit with some of these anti-Lahey people introduced me to Boston's hospital wars. After five minutes of aimless talk with two members of the anti-Lahey group, I realized that they were treating me with suspicion, as an enemy spy. I produced a press ID card with a photograph to reassure them, and we got down to business. They insisted on anonymity. They seemed to have come through a harrowing experience and refused to climb out of their trench and face Lahey on open ground. They were scared. Some members of the group had already backed down and signed a memorandum of agreement with Lahey, promising to withdraw a suit they had filed against Lahey's proposal in return for Lahey's promise not to sue them.

According to Lahey's opponents, Lahey wants to move to the suburbs in order to become a major regional hospital. The small community hospitals in the suburban belt around Boston might have done this themselves had they wanted to, but none did. The small hospitals thought that downtown Boston should serve as the hub of the wheel, the place where acutely sick patients are sent. Lahey is challenging that system: it would provide special care in the suburbs for a wide variety of problems. It would like to become a hub in its own right.

Lahey's original plan, which won approval in 1972, would have cost $43 million and provided 200 beds in 400,000 square feet of space. Lahey might have built that without trouble. But it let the certificate of need expire, and last December came back for a renewal at a time when other projects were being slashed. It asked for permission to build something that would cost $80 million and cover 674,000 square feet. Lahey got a renewed certification by persuading the state that this was the same project that won approval in 1972. This enlarged hospital would have 200 beds, but each bed would be in a private room. Lahey's opponents say that no one knows how many beds there will be in fact. They claim that although the planners have approved this new building, they don't know what will be in it.

Lahey's opponents believe this project slipped through while others were being cut back because Lahey has powerful friends. I was shown a private memo written for the file by a couple of state health planners who thoroughly disapproved of a higher-up decision to avoid making trouble for Lahey. The planners thought that Lahey would become another "white elephant" like a couple of other new hospitals that are floundering in debt. They wrote that the project had been pushed through despite legal and economic objections because politicians favored it. The memo, which made big headlines when UPI published it, said people in Senator Kennedy's office had put pressure on state health officials to approve Lahey's plans. Kennedy is a trustee of the Lahey Clinic and chairman of the Senate subcommittee that passes on health legislation. A Kennedy aide told *Boston Globe* reporter Richard Knox that he had indeed called the lieutenant governor of Massachusetts (the son of US House Speaker Tip O'Neill) about the project but that he hadn't meant to pressure the state. Knox also reported that "legal intimidation" was used to clear Lahey's opponents from the field. The people I spoke with said they had been warned that Lahey would spend more on lawyers' fees than its opponents could afford because Lahey had $11 million invested in the project already.

Dr. Robert Wise, Lahey's chief executive officer, was queried about these reports. He exploded at the mere

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mention of the *Boston Globe*. "That was the most non-factual, misrepresented news article that has ever been printed in American history," he said. Wise said Lahey never threatened to sue its enemies. Rather, he hinted, the enemies withdrew because they knew they were engaged in an illegal attempt to restrain trade.

Lahey used two clubs to battle its way through the state bureaucracy. The first was precedent—the fact that in 1972 it had been given a certificate of need. This carried legal weight, even though the project isn't needed today. The second was the $11 million Lahey already has spent on the venture. Even the judge who decided to dismiss part of the case against Lahey in April justified his decision by saying that Lahey's finances would be hurt if the state delayed any longer. The truth is that Lahey cannot afford *not* to go ahead with the plan, no matter how risky it may be. No one wants to be responsible for stopping it, for the person who does will be blamed for the financial loss, even though the misjudgment was Lahey's. This financial momentum is one of the forces that drives health costs upward.

The fact that Lahey has been given legal permission to ignore the laws of economics doesn't mean that it can do so without penalty. Stephen Weiner, the chairman of the hospital cost review commission in Massachusetts, said recently that he is not at all certain that Lahey will remain solvent after the new hospital opens. An important fact Lahey may have ignored is that the federal and private insurance funds no longer fulfill the hospitals' every desire; they do not always reimburse the full amount a hospital charges the patient. Blue Cross, for example, will not pay the full charge for a private room in Massachusetts, yet Lahey intends to have nothing but private rooms. Weiner's office made a study of Lahey's finances based on Lahey's own optimistic assumptions and found that a bed in the new hospital would cost on the average $517 a day to maintain, and that each outpatient who visited the clinic would cost $51 to serve. When Lahey officials read these figures in the *Globe* they were furious. They went back to Weiner's commission and, after a bit of haggling, persuaded the staff to express the grim facts in a different way: now each bed is calculated to cost $380 a day, but each outpatient visit will cost $70. And Lahey expects there will be many, many outpatient visits. Even with the recalculation, the costs are considerably higher than those of Massachusetts General, the best hospital in Boston. They include much bigger construction bills than old hospitals had to pay and—quite important—a larger amount of debt service. The financing of Lahey will cost $15 million.

Dr. Wise insists that the charge to patients will not be extraordinary—perhaps $192 a day for a room in the hospital, the rate the best hospitals in Boston will be charging when Lahey opens. But if this is so, the rest of the cost will have to be made up some other way, perhaps by overcharging on tests, drugs and other services, by keeping patients for long stays and by using all the tricks that hospitals have for generating cash. In sum, Lahey can break even only by doing everything that President Carter's new hospital cost control program is meant to stop. If Lahey's optimistic financial assumptions are wrong, its costs will be larger and it may go bankrupt even despite these tricks.

Construction has not begun, but it is a foregone conclusion that if Lahey doesn't go out of business when the new hospital opens, one of its sister hospitals will. In Boston the struggle for survival is acute. Building new hospitals in this bloated environment might make sense if the new ones were more efficient than the old ones, more open to the public and more available for use by non-staff doctors. But that is not the case. The Faulkner Hospital, recently built in a neighborhood called Jamaica Plain, demonstrates how far from efficient a new hospital can be.

The Faulkner was meant to be the most elaborately modern hospital in Boston. It won the planners' approval about the same time as Lahey, but was built immediately. It opened officially last January. Its design is lavish. Food and other supplies are delivered through the building by an automated monorail system designed to cut labor costs. Now that the hospital is open, however, the system seems actually to require extra labor. All the rooms are private, as rooms at Lahey will be. There are other amenities—a bathroom for each patient, for example. By the time the Faulkner was ready to open, it was bankrupt. Construction costs were larger than anticipated. Equipment was more expensive. Blue Cross refused to pay the full rate the Faulkner had to charge for a private room. Medicaid and Medicare were similarly grudging. A projected first-year deficit of several million dollars was sopped up by an emergency bailout loan, but this didn't solve the Faulkner's problem.

Only one kind of moneylender could have been gulled into backing this kind of project, the same kind that would pay Lockheed to build a cargo plane whose engines fall off—the federal government. The Faulkner originally secured the bulk of its $27 million mortgage with the help of a guarantee from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, even though some local officials and hospital bond reviewers were against the idea. When the inevitable deficit appeared, HUD swooped back in an unusual mission of mercy and increased the mortgage. (There is a bureaucratic law that says mistakes will go away if you keep spending money on them.) HUD's generosity may not be enough, though. There is every reason to believe the Faulkner will continue to lose money because none of the insurance funds will pay the full amount that it must charge if it is to break even on its services.

Lahey has arranged for a HUD mortgage, too. The only thing holding up approval of its $70 million guarantee is HUD's requirement that all pending

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litigation against the project be cleared away in advance. Lahey cannot do that just now, so it has asked HUD to waive the condition and please hurry up with the money. It is entirely possible that Lahey will get HUD's approval and go the way of the Faulkner Hospital. According to Weiner of the cost review commission, by the time Lahey opens the state will be reviewing relative costs among hospitals much more strictly than at present, and insurance funds will be even more reluctant to finance luxury services.

While the private hospitals are warring among themselves about who will expand and who will serve meals from automated monorails, the public hospitals are struggling to provide basic services to the indigent. Leslie MacLeod, administrator of the Cambridge City Hospital, said there has been a "great retrogression in the kind of health care" provided in Massachusetts. Twenty percent of the patients in his hospital are "self-paying," meaning they have no insurance of any kind and are not protected by any federal health program. In 1975, Governor Michael Dukakis and the state legislature decided to end a state program that gave aid to people who do not fall into any of the federal relief categories. As a result, many people who aren't on welfare, who are older than 21 but younger than 65, are given no help. The newly unemployed are especially vulnerable; they can't afford private insurance but are not poor enough for Medicaid. The burden of paying for their care has been shifted from the state onto the weak shoulders of the city taxpayer. Cambridge City Hospital had a million-dollar deficit this year; next year the shortfall may be worse, and the city may not wish to continue the subsidy. (I should point out that this deficit, unlike the one at Faulkner, was not incurred by getting quick financing on a risky venture, but by serving the community too well.) MacLeod said that services have not been cut back, but if nothing is done the city may ask the hospital to trim its wisest investment—the subsidy to clinics that give low-cost preventive care to people in their own neighborhoods. Cambridge recently won an award from the federal government for its neighborhood clinics; backwardness of the federal financing system may now force the clinics to close. When people are not given preventive care, they arrive at the hosptial emergency room needing acute care. This costs more, not less. The stupidity of the system is stunning.

The city of Boston has more severe problems. The Commissioner of Boston's City Hospital, David Rosenbloom, explained, "The stark reality is that one third of the bills we're sending out aren't worth the paper they're printed on." No one pays them. BCH has assumed the burden of providing $12 million worth of care that the state used to pay for. The people who benefit from this generosity (30 percent of the patients) are the poor and "lots of people who aren't poor but who by virtue of their illness become impoverished." No one in the state government, according to Rosenbloom, seems very interested: "In my discussions with them, I don't think they could care less."

Rosenbloom has not cut back services in the hospital or at the neighborhood preventive care clinics. "We are making do with somewhat less personnel, so everybody's working harder. We are deferring equipment purchases, repairing equipment we'd rather replace. . . ." He said the crunch will come this summer. The impact has been delayed thus far by the "total ineptitude" of the state welfare department, which is still paying bills from 1974, 1975 and 1976, providing a gentle flow of late cash. Eventually the welfare clerks will catch up with reality. Rosenbloom said: "Unless the state and the federal government just reverse themselves and start dealing in some honest fashion with the question of who is going to pay for the care of the poor people, this system will go bankrupt."

Boston, which has been generous and intelligent in providing preventive care to the public, is now being punished for its generosity and foresight. The full cost of this goodwill has been dumped on the city taxpayers. Perhaps this is intended to chasten them into believing that their generous impulse was a mistake. They may not know, however, that other hospitals outside the city budget are more spendthrift than the public institutions, or that money spent on health care in one private corner of the city must be subtracted from what is available for the rest of the system. No one is telling them about this. They may not realize that the expansion of a private clinic like Lahey has a bearing on the kind of public care Boston can offer.

Rosenbloom does understand the connection, however, and he explained it cogently: "Most hospitals exist with public funds. The Lahey wouldn't exist, for example, without a federal guarantee of its mortgage. When the Lahey or any other hospital opens, a certain percentage of its patients will be paid for by Medicare and Medicaid; and if its true costs are to be met . . . there is simply less money in the pot to pay other bills. When there is less money in the pot, the poor get cut off." That is why Rosenbloom is in favor of controlling costs in private hospitals. There is no other way, given the public's detestation of tax increases, to compete with private hospitals for the money that is needed to support public health. As Rosenbloom said, "It is more convenient to cut off the poor than to come to grips with the evil of the reimbursement system." If the poor can live without public support, then grandiose clunkers like the Faulkner can do the same.

Coming:

Health Care V:
Blue Cross

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

Old Wars

Cross of Iron (Avco Embassy). The May 4th issue of *Variety* carried a two-page ad for Sam Peckinpah's film about World War Two, *Convoy*, "now shooting," with Ernest Borgnine as Dirty Lyle. This will follow Peckinpah's new film about World War Two, *Cross of Iron*, already shot, starring Peckinpah (figuratively) as Dirty Sam.

Careers like his tempt one into elegiac generalizations about American directors, American art and culture, "in American lives there are no second acts," and so on. Well, at least one can say that in some American directors' lives there are no second facts. Peckinpah came to prominence as a director concerned with aging men of violence, and that's where he has stayed, more or less. *Ride the High Country* and *The Wild Bunch* got him his name, deservedly, but much of what he has been doing since has worn it down. Not all of his later work has included age but all of it has included violence. Some of it was very well made, like *The Getaway* and *The Killer Elite;* but none of it has really advanced him, and here he is with more age-and-violence, in thorough disarray.

Cross of Iron was made in Yugoslavia, and its subject is the German army—on the Russian front, of course, so that our sympathies won't be divided. If the Germans are only killing Russians whose country they have invaded, we won't feel as torn as if they were killing French or Dutch or Yugoslavians whom they invaded, and we can empathize with the invaders' internal dramas. This, by the way, is the second film in recent months to deal with (some) admirable German soldiers: the other was *The Eagle Has Landed*. The attitudes of popular film are better than a calendar.

The screenplay, based on a novel by Willi Heinrich, was written by three people including Julius J. Epstein who once lent a hand to *Casablanca*. What they have managed to come up with is a dull and stupid mélange of war-film clichés of action, characterization and moral dilemma, only this time in German uniform. James Coburn, lean and gray—he looks really smashing—is a sergeant who likes to fight his "own" war and is more or less allowed to do so by the officers who know him. He gets into trouble with a newcomer, a martinet (Maximilian Schell) who, underneath his Junker rigidity, has a penchant for—guess what!—homosexuality. Old and wise, with oodles of *Weltschmerz*, is James Mason, sighing a good deal as a philosophic colonel; younger and wise is his aide David Warner, an actor who makes your average robot seem like Fred Astaire. Senta Berger does an appearance—including her ass—as a womanly nurse who comforts Coburn when he goes to a hospital with wounds.

The first few minutes made me think that I was going to get the impact of battle as rarely before. Soon it all became bang-bang. The writing is dreadful, the acting is platitudinous, and all that Peckinpah seems eager about is making sure that his trademarks are noted: an opening with children (here they sing on the soundtrack), giving us innocence before the muck; girls bathing in casks (here a Russian nurse); and, natch, a lot of slow-motion killing. What he doesn't give us is the picture we might have expected from him eight years after *The Wild Bunch*.

Well, *Convoy* is coming. Slowly, I hope. Which is what Peckinpah now forces me to hope.

Cousin Angelica (New Yorker). Films from Spain filter through the US from time to time, and an unexpected aspect has been that, even during Franco's lifetime, occasional Spanish films tested orthodoxies, social and moral. The big names among directors were Juan-Antonio Bardem (*Death of a Cyclist*) and Luis Garcia Berlanga (*Not on Your Life!*). Luis Buñuel, Spanish of course, has spent most of his life in exile.

Within the last 10 years we have had some of the work of Carlos Saura, and what I've seen of it—*The Hunt* and *The Garden of Delights*—has been rather onerous: gravy-rich photography and ponderous symbolism, like the worst Czech and Polish and Latin-American films. A Spanish moralist without Buñuel's humor makes for a long evening.

Much brighter news from Saura with his new film *Cousin Angelica*—not his latest but the latest to arrive here. It was made in 1973 while Franco was still alive, which may explain why it doesn't reach any resolution, but Franco was ancient at the time, which may explain why Saura took on this subject at all. (This is not to say that Rightism had disappeared; reportedly this picture was attacked violently.)

Saura's script, written with Rafael Azcona, is about a man from Madrid, apparently in his 40s, who revisits some relatives in a country town, apparently in the 1960s. He had spent a month with them in this town in 1936 when he was about 12, just as the Civil War was beginning. (The man is played engagingly enough, if not very movingly, by Jose Luis Lopez Vazquez, who strikingly resembles Erich Leinsdorf.) The picture operates on two time levels: the present visit and the earlier one. His cousin Angelica, about his age, is now married, unhappily, and has a daughter. The girl who plays her daughter also plays Angelica in the flashback scenes. The actor who plays Angelica's present-day husband also plays her father in the flashbacks. But Lopez Vasquez plays both the man and his earlier 12-year-old self.

This casting mixture is slightly confusing at first, but it's quickly sorted out, and its various points—of psychic implication and inheritance—are neatly made. In Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*

Films Worth Seeing

Aguirre, The Wrath of God. A German-made political allegory about *conquistadores*, Peru 1560. Not thematically enlightening but marvelous to watch.

Annie Hall. Woody Allen's best film so far—which means mostly unobtrusive direction, mostly successful gags about neurotic sex and love.

Harlan County, USA. A (for once) deserved Academy Award has brought back this fine documentary about coal miners.

Network. The TV networks slashed with Paddy Chayefsky's rubber knife. But it's well acted and fast.

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old Victor Sjöstrom played himself in the flashbacks of his character as a child, and the effect was overwhelming. It wasn't intended to be overwhelming here, and isn't, but it insures that we get the idea of the child as father to the man who is still to some degree that child.

Saura handles the interplay of time with mostly extraordinary skill. The whole picture is directed with an ease that comes from no compulsion to prove anything, which was not true of the earlier Saura that I saw. There are now sharp edges of humor. The family goes to visit a relative, a nun, who has stigmata on her hands: she sits quietly leaking blood into a basin while she discusses family matters. The young Angelica's father, a prime fascist, gets a shrapnel wound in his arm: the arm is now strapped straight out in a brace that gives him a permanent fascist salute. (It's this especially that made political trouble for the picture in Spain.)

For a foreigner the picture's chief appeal is two kinds of travelogue: physical and psychological. The former, purely of landscape, should not be underrated. (I wonder whether a new Swedish thriller, *Man on the Roof*, would have been praised as it was if it had been set in Sandusky instead of Stockholm.) The latter, from Spain, is still a relative novelty in the US. After every war come the questions about what the other side was *really* like. We—meaning those everywhere who were anti-Franco—never learned much about the other side because "we" lost, and the winners then purveyed the images they commanded. Henry de Montherlant explored post-war Spanish political minds in his beautiful and neglected novel *Chaos and Night*. Alain Resnais and Jorge Semprun did a comparable but much inferior fill in *La Guerre est finie*. Here, on a small scale, Saura gives us some idea of what a bourgeois Spanish family, very Catholic of course, thought of the war; how they lived; and how by indirection, it affected the way they live now.

But, interesting though it is, that's all the film does. The two time strands are juxtaposed and that's it. As for the protagonist himself, nothing happens. He arrives and he departs. He is just a mechanism. If the film was not to move toward some conclusion in him, then it needed a great deal more intrinsic weight as it went along. Aside from the travelogue rewards (which obviously don't apply in Spain), there are only the familiar tugs of time gone irretrievably by. The picture doesn't finish, it just ends. It's very much worth seeing, but it's not finally satisfying.

B. H. Haggin on Classical Music

Opera and Piano

The statement attributed to Hindemith—that a musical work has a face; and if one didn't like that face one shouldn't preform the work, but if one performed it one shouldn't change it—is an affirmation of the inviolability of an artist's work, a 19th century composer's no less than a 19th century painter's or novelist's. The face of Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète* is the music spectacularly sung and the action splendidly staged of a "grand opera" for the Paris Opera; therefore, according to Hindemith, if one chooses to present the work one must present the "grand opera" Meyerbeer envisioned, as the Paris Opera did in 1849, and as the Metropolitan did in 1918, when it had Caruso for Jean, Matzenauer for Fidès and Muzio for Berthe, and had the money for stage splendor; and if the Metropolitan of today doesn't have those vocal and financial resources—if, that is, it has one great singer, Marilyn Horne, whose sumptuous-sounding and expressively moving delivery of Fidès's *"Ah! mon fils"* is comparable with what I remember as Matzenauer's, but has for Jean only James McCracken, whose agreeable tenor voice becomes unattractively constricted and altered in timbre in its upper range, and for Marthe only Renata Scotto, whose every climactic high note is a strident scream, and if it hasn't the money for splendid staging—it shouldn't produce the work. For at best, with those insufficient resources utilized by a stage director who recognized the inviolability of Meyerbeer's work and had skill, taste

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and intelligence for the task of making it effective on the stage, the result would be an inadequate realization of what Meyerbeer envisioned; and in the actual situation, with those resources utilized by the Metropolitan's John Dexter, who is in every way the opposite of the director I just described, the result is a monstrosity of contemporary operatic stagecraft which should not be presented to the American public as Meyerbeer's grand opera.

Dexter would have produced the same staging of *Le Prophète* even if the money had been available for the splendor Meyerbeer envisioned—which is to say that it represented the ideas about opera production in general and his particular productions that he expressed in the statements quoted in a *Times* interview and a *New Yorker* "Talk of the Town." Staging an opera, for him, is not merely to give effect to what the librettist and composer created: it is to treat their work as material for him to manipulate and change in accordance with *his* ideas about it. If Verdi was content to deal with the hackneyed operatic entanglements of a few characters whom, for the sake of novelty, he placed in ancient Egypt, Dexter was not: his staging of *Aida* was devised to make the audience aware of the rigidly ritualized society into which the ancient Egyptians were locked by the all-powerful priests—something Verdi didn't concern himself with in the opera. Similarly Dexter's staging of *Le Prophète* was intended to get the audience to see "the work [that] exists on a much more profound level" than the immediate spectacular *pièce de théâtre* utilizing the libretto about the historical figure Jean of Leyden and several unhistorical characters—to see, that is, a work in which Meyerbeer, according to Dexter, "[tried] to capture, musically and dramatically, the explosive atmosphere of Northern Europe in the fifteen-thirties . . . when the movement for a populist, instinctive religion had reached the breaking point." To achieve this he replaced the realistic sets for the scenes of Meyerbeer's *pièce de théâtre* with Peter Wexler's single permanent skeletal framework of an uncompleted cathedral extending around the stage "like a huge cage," a symbol throughout the work of the Catholic Church that is a cage enclosing and dominating the people struggling against it. For the rest Dexter—doing away with what for him is the "clutter" of realistic staging—filled the stage with what to my eye is a clutter of wagons, platforms and stairs that are shifted about to provide the successive scenes.

All this he supported, in the interviews, with pronouncements which were received by the awed interviewers (and by his Metropolitan associates) as impressive truth, but which I found to be specious intellectualizing unrelated to the realities of what he professed to deal with. He thought scenery should

> *suggest rather than state. You don't try to get the opera to do what the cinema does better. Audiences are not satisfied with seeing a bad attempt at putting Egypt on the stage. Not when they can get the real thing in the cinema. We've got to get back to provoking the imagination of the audience.*

But a bad attempt at putting Egypt on the stage is no argument against a good one. And a film of Seville is no more an argument against Eugene Berman's great sets for *Don Giovanni* and *The Barber of Seville* than photographs of Monte Ste. Victoire are against Cézanne's paintings of it: what one wants to see on the stage is precisely the transformation of actual Seville by Berman's imagination. It is this imagined reality that stimulates the audience's imagination; but since it is clearly something Dexter can neither envision nor understand, he will have none of it; and his stimulus to the audience's imagination is the wagons, platforms and stairs in *Le Prophète* that I cannot imagine anyone's imagination being stimulated by.

The title of the *Times* interview was *Dexter—An Artist Who Pinches Pennies;* and the Metropolitan's directors, faced with the company's financial difficulties, may be congratulating themselves on their good fortune in having a Dexter to supply Art at Woolworth prices. But what Dexter supplies for those prices, the *Prophète* that Metropolitan audiences are paying Tiffany prices for, is art of Woolworth quality.

It was interesting to read Vladimir Ashkenazy's statement to an interviewer once that with Beethoven and Mozart he felt "at something of a disadvantage compared with someone like Daniel Barenboim who has been brought up in the classical Viennese tradition," and then to hear him, when he sat down at the piano, play with the disciplined mastery of music and instrument that Barenboim didn't have, and achieve with it the coherently shaped performances of Beethoven and Mozart that Barenboim didn't achieve. (One can hear in the recorded performance of Mozart's Concerto K.365 for two pianos Ashkenazy's sensitive and elegant statement of a phrase followed by Barenboim's heavy-handed and rhythmically sloppy repetition of it.) Recently, however, Ashkenazy's playing has on occasion sounded as though he had been affected by his listening to Barenboim, and also to Furtwängler, whose undisciplined and shapeless performances Barenboim and Ashkenazy admire. One such occasion was Ashkenazy's recording of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 57 *(Appassionata),* in which he played the hushed opening statements of the first movement as a slow introduction to the outburst in fast tempo a few moments later, and continued to shift back and forth between slow and fast throughout the movement, instead of maintaining, with subtle modifications, the basic tempo of the movement established at the beginning. He dealt with the first movement of Chopin's Sonata Op. 58 in the same Furtwänglerian manner at one of his recitals in Carnegie Hall this year; and Furtwänglerian too were the excessively long pauses between the opening statements of Chopin's Polonaise-Fantaisie Op. 61 at that recital.

The Quartetto Italiano, when I heard it 25 years ago, produced a marvelously blended ensemble sound, whose fine gradations it employed in a style of great delicacy, sensitivity and elegance that was admirably suited to the writing of Boccherini, Haydn and Debussy, but not to the forceful writing of Beethoven. This continued to be true of the performances I heard on Angel records in the years that followed; and so I was unprepared for the remarkable change a few years ago: the powerful sound and expressiveness of the Italiano's playing of Beethoven on Philips records, first in superb performances of the last quartets, then in equally effective performances of the middle group. A concert at the YMHA in New York this year provided my first hearing of the Italiano in a concert hall after 25 years; and the performances of Beethoven's Op. 132 and Op. 59 No. 2 attained even greater expressive eloquence than the ones on records—to say nothing of their other extraordinary excellences.

As it happened, the first concert of the Cleveland Quartet's Beethoven series at Alice Tully Hall ended with a beautifully played and expressively effective performance of Op. 132, after excellent performances of Op. 18 No. 6 and Op. 59 No. 1.

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The Poems of John Fuller

This is our eighth of a number of presentations of poets and essays on poets. John Fuller (born 1937) published his first two books with Chatto & Windus, London; these were Fairground Music, *1961, and* The Tree that Walked, *1967. His later books are published by Secker & Warburg, London:* Cannibals and Missionaries, *1972,* Epistles to Several Persons, *1973 (these two published in America by David R. Godine as* Poems & Epistles, *1974), and* The Mountain in the Sea, *1975. The sonnet reprinted here is from* Fairground Music, *"The Cook's Lesson" from* The Tree that Walked, *the next two from* Cannibals and Missionaries, *and the remaining ones from* The Mountain in the Sea. © John Fuller, 1961, 1967, 1972, 1975.

In a Railway Compartment

Oxford to London, 1884:
Against the crimson arm-rest leaned a girl
Of ten, holding a muff, twisting a curl,
Drumming her heels in boredom on the floor
Until a white-haired gentleman who saw
She hated travelling produced a case
Of puzzles: 'Seven Germans run a race . . .
Unwind this maze, escape the lion's paw . . .
The princess must be lowered by her hair . . .
The train entered a tunnel, shrieking, all
The lights went out and when he took her hand
She was the princess in the tower and
A lion faced her on the moonlit wall
Who roared and reached and caught and held her there.

The Cook's Lesson

When the King at last could not manage an erection,
The tables were wiped down and a banquet prepared.
The Cook was a renegade, a master of innuendo,
And was later hanged for some imaginary subversion,
Found laughing in the quarter of the filthy poor.
This, had we known it, was to be his last banquet,
And as such was fittingly dissident and experimental.
Often he had confided to us the tenets of his craft,
How a true artist is obsessed with the nature of his material,
And must make evident the process of creation in preference
To the predictable appearance of the finished product.
The charcoal-burners were lit, the porcelain laid
And the simple broths prepared in which the meal was enacted,
For this was a living meal, a biological history of food.
I cannot remember much. We sweated and fainted and were revived
With fragrant towels. We ate furiously and were rewarded
With knowledge of a kind we did not even recognize.
Spawn in the luke gruel divided, gilled and finned,
Swam down flowered channels to the brink of oil
And fell to the plate. Before our eyes
The litter spurted into the fire, picked out by tongs,
Eggs hatched into the soup, embryos bled,
Seeds sprouted in the spoon. As I said, we ate fast,
Far back into life, eating fast into life.
Now I understand that food is never really dead:
Frilled and forked, towered, dusted, sliced,
In mimic aspic or dispersed in sauces,
Food is something that will not willingly lie down.
The bland liquids slid over our tongues as
Heartbeats under crusts, mouthfuls of feathers.

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All the Members of My Tribe Are Liars

Think of a self-effacing missionary
Tending the vices of a problem tribe.
He knows the quickest cure for beri-beri
And how to take a bribe.

And so the mind will never say it's beaten
By primitive disturbance of the liver:
Its logic will prevent its being eaten,
Get it across the river.

But faced with this assured inconsequence
That damns the very method that is used,
It leaves the heart unproselytized and hence
Admits that it's confused.

I know I'm acting, but I still must act.
I melt to foolishness, and want it ended.
Why it continues is this simple fact:
I'd hate to end it.

For now the jungle moods assert their terms
And there's no way to check them if they lie:
The mind attempts to solve the thing, but squirms
And knows exactly why.

The world is everything that is the case.
You cannot see it if you are inside it.
That's why the tortoise always wins the race:
The very terms decide it.

I cannot help it if I am contented
With being discontented that I falter:
That's why psychology was first invented
So that we needn't alter.

It is a strange position to be in.
It would be different if I didn't know
Why the unlikely animal should win,
Which cannibal should row.

You'd think there'd be a way of cutting out
Those self-destructive layers of introspection.
To reach the truth at last without a doubt
Of making the connection.

That's why the missionary, on his guard,
Is wondering why the cannibal's so merry,
And why it is so very very hard
To be a missonary.

Annotations of Giant's Town

Living in the air
Sleeping anywhere
Sheep are known to fall
But safe behind the wall
Cutting a fine edge
On outcrop or ledge
Gone if I look twice
Stones black with ice
Groan beneath my feet
Or make a cold seat
Storms come like love
Are level not above
Far is down not high
Tiny to the eye
Shining to the west
Wrinkled fishes nest
Blinking in the sun
Living is begun

Height dizzies me
And what I see
Standing in his palm
At the end of his arm
That is our fort
Is beneath thought
Miserable track
Trees folded back
Sea's lazy licking
Thin picking
Fin and feather
Out of the weather
Shouting defiance
Loud nonsense
Cloud stuff
From having enough
Come out of stone
Height is alone

Summer was his table
Eating what we were able
Sweet berry and grass
Cattle run in the pass
That will not meet their owner
Fool that is their donor
Who let them run away
Now we can eat all day
Cow-milk that we squeeze
Dripping into cheese
Ripping her fat sire
Out of the turning fire
Doubtful of our luck
Having bones to suck
Saving something for
The greed we can't ignore
Hugging us to death
Summer is his breath

Once by work of frost
Rocks split and were lost
Fox hid in their boulders
Fur-smells on shoulders
Stirred memory of fear
When alone and fox near
Then fox-fear and fox-coat
Settled at the throat
Met on the hill one night
Faces not in sight
Spaces behind the ears
Cold with fox-fears
Older without thought
Rambled beyond the fort
Scrambling down the scree
Knowing what to see
No more seeing what
Once seen and is not

Something happens there
Thunder in the air
Under a trickling stone
Where sheep have gone
Staring at his face
Or its liquid trace
For all above the hill
His expressions spill
This way and that
Careful as a cat
Hairs out on the neck
Ribbed like a wreck
Gibbering in the rain
Night closing in
Fur round the chin
Stirring of ember
Something to remember

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Fear is no longer
When we grow stronger
Then the clean stranger
Is known danger
Visible and small
No longer tall
Whole bands at the border
Keep in order
Leaping from trees
Hear metal knees
Gear snatched away
Only the weak stay
Grown attached to death
Short of breath
Brought to some harm
By the timid arm
Die in his cage
Fear's hostage

Winter in the wood
Trees where they stood
Pleased to be seen
Though no longer green
Rowan and oak
Cut for smoke
Hut-warmth for songs
Fur and gongs
Stirring his tribute
With bared cubit
Pith and sour berry
To make us merry
Brew for love and him
For his unseen whim
Or for his pain
The cold come again
Luck running thin
Winter closing in

Cairn

Stairs leading nowhere, roof
To no accommodation, monument
To itself, half-scattered.

An old badge of belonging
To the available heights,
A shrug and a smile, as though

Having climbed two thousand feet
You could climb a few feet more
And the view might be different.

Evening Signs at Gallt-y-Ceiliog

Why here? Have we stopped pretending not to notice?
Glance up to the window: something has just disappeared.
Try to read, and find it clamouring for attention.

The house is establishing its relations with the hill,
Its corners not its sides at compass points,
The hill edging it out into the sun.

The evening chaffinch scours for basking grubs.
The long-shadowed flock squeeze their tattoos of dung
Like dropped jewels pattering on the gravel.

What does the house know, patient of all its creatures?
Patient of bird and sheep and the small movements
Of uncollected insects and the first bat?

It must be the hill's secret, older than the stones
Which make the spaces we furnish with our laughter
And chill the natural warmth of turf and spray.

The chairs are angled for conversation like
A stage set. A hand writes, detached and horrible.
One more bottle and the mountain will be level!

Why here? Is it something about to come or to go?
The house knows nothing, neither does the hill.
The creatures walk in their created shadows

Noiseless as the burning tread to the west of the sun
Returning from its career as a minor god,
Parting the sea, coming at last to land.

Why here? The meeting-place of all the made
And unmade, is it, a point of old discomfort?
The signs are upon us, friends. We've no roots here.

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Boundaries

Trees have come up as far as they can
And stand about uncertainly.
Beyond the thistles of the last field
A stream rises, and a lane links
The few farms.

Maps show the contours of the clays
And fields the justice done to heirs.
Down in the village the stream is boastful
Though it does nothing much up here.
You can walk across it.

Boundaries are what link us, surely,
When neighbours turn together from barren
Pasture, when new walls remember
The passing of patriarchs, the drying
Of shared waters.

As trees send saplings to the valley
And all the lanes wind down again,
As the sun rises and sets, creating
New shadows from the same stone,
We are all one.

Within the exact boundaries of
Our skins, of which one inch beyond
Is Nomad's Lodge, the shivering crevice,
We create friend, daughter, lover.
The map converges.

Sleeping out at Gallt-y-Ceiliog

Something, perhaps an idea, is again eluding me.
It belongs nowhere in particular but might
At any moment appear and surprise me.

It's not part of the usual epiphanies.
It has no colour, or even night-colour, since
Lying awake half the night will not fix it.

The trees are alive, the candle flame gusty
And flattened. We lie in our quilted chrysalises
With still heads, like ancient funeral masks.

The moon at our backs rises over the mountains:
An understudy, practising with silent lips,
Sharing the sky with one star above the holly tree.

Nothing is spoken. The precise text of leaf
And crag is not known, or has been quite forgotten.
We're happy with what is offered, like visitors.

Perhaps after all there is nothing to remember
But this simplicity. The grass is grey
At dawn. It is the earth awakes, not I.

The Poetry of John Fuller

In 1969 John Fuller published a sonnet-sequence called "The Labours of Hercules." This title referred to the poem itself as well as to its subject: the sequence consists of 14 Petrarchan sonnets, each beginning with the last line of the one before, and a 15th sonnet made up of the first lines of the preceding 14. Technical fireworks of this sort—especially in the sonnet form—had lit up Fuller's earlier career, but neither he nor anyone else writing in English had attempted anything comparably spectacular before. (There are similar sequences by Sidney and Donne, but these are technically less ambitious.)

Even more surprising than the formal acrobatics of Fuller's poem was its poetic excellence. Yet the poem is bitterly dissatisfied with itself. As it approaches its final sonnet, it looks back to review "All my great failures." It recognizes at last that its structures were put together for their own sake only. While claiming a more than formal purpose for itself, the poem knows that its claims are false—but that it is too late to change. Here is the culminating sonnet of the 15:

I did all that I had to do for you,
And what I did was nothing, some mistake
Where time was drilled and matter kept awake
Beneath a careless and impartial blue,
And only my achievement really knew
What it was for, was only for your sake
Dragged from my existence like a lake,
Brought senseless in to its admirers' view.

So we shall never see the end of it
Since our continuing is what we share:
When we contrive our parting by and by
It will not matter which of us has quit,
For no one left pretending not to care
Will sit there, bravely smiling, and not cry.

The sequence was evidently conceived as an allegorical address made by the conscious mind to the instinctive flesh, but in the writing it became a love poem of a very odd kind. (Possibly its ancestry includes Meredith's "Modern Love.") Each of the Herculean labors is modernized into a lover's emotional ordeal. The sequence speaks in that tone of bewildered defensive pride that, looking over the wreckage it has made of love, tries to evade its knowledge that its claims to generosity and concern are spurious, and had been spurious from the start. "I did all that I had to do for you"—but it never served your need. "Our continuing is what we share"—but it is all we share. "We shall never see the end of it"—for when it is ended, there will be no "we" to see it. The impulse in

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which the poem began may have been a loving one, but "In ignorance we break/What we love most." The poem—the labors—is, in contrast, knowing and unbroken, but the poem neither needs love nor gives it.

The whole sequence is an extended gloss on a famous dictum of Auden's: "The girl whose boy-friend starts writing her love poems should be on her guard. Perhaps he really does love her, but one thing is certain: while he was writing his poems he was not thinking of her but of his own feelings and that is suspicious." This does not go far enough: the lover who writes *good* poems is less concerned with his feelings than with getting the poem to come out right. The loved one is two steps away, not one, and receding fast. And as with love poems, so with any poem that tries to address—or be about—anything in the world outside poetry: too strict a formal order isolates.

Poetic virtuosity is a rare gift; it can also be a dangerous one. Fuller's virtuosity led him to write so many good poems from the start of his career that for a long time he hesitated to risk giving rein to a simplicity that might have led to even better ones. There had always been a layer of instability and unease beneath the polished surface of his work, some sense (as in "The Cook's Lesson") that each poem might be his last, but his early work kept that instability under control. After the crisis intimated in "The Labours of Hercules" all this began to change. Recently Fuller has become not only the best poetic craftsman of his generation in England, but one of England's best contemporary poets by any standard. Before he could live up to his early promise, however, Fuller had to learn that his limitless technical skills had limits as means of writing poems. Only when he had in fact achieved the greatest possible control over his materials, as in "The Labours," could he openly question the value of control itself. His doubts are earned, not easy ones.

The change in his work came at first through indirection. For a few years Fuller put aside received forms to experiment instead with complex structures of his own invention, as in "Annotations of Giant's Town." These experiments, more gnomic than dazzling, were still formal, but their edges were rougher than before, their landscapes more untamed, their manners less urban. (Much of their style derives from the premonitory archaisms of early Auden, as Fuller's earlier style descended from the more formal urbanities of Auden's later poems. Fuller has written a book on Auden, and his own career in many ways reverses the sequence of Auden's.) Fuller gathered these poems, together with "The Labours of Hercules" and some other poems, into his third book in 1972. This was *Cannibals and Missionaries*. Its publication almost but not quite marked the end of Fuller's technical apprenticeship; he was to permit himself one last formal fling.

In the summer of 1972 he wrote a series of five verse letters to friends, using the Burns stanza. This is much more difficult than it looks. The poems throw off sparks, but for all their technical razzle-dazzle, they are transitional poems which moved Fuller away from his old obsession with technique. First of all, they take themselves much less seriously than did the earlier poems:

But ssch! you know and understand
The way these verses have been planned,
Gritty like little bits of sand
Not shining quartz,
No interference from a gland,
Just random thoughts.

Let's start by thinking of objectives.
Poets hate to have directives:
They're on their own, not on collectives,
Share and share about,
And what inspires their best invectives
Is what they *care about.*

In its content, this protests too much. In the uneasy period before Fuller renounced his virtuosity he was claiming his private privileges with a vehemence he would soon let subside. (And as for "collectives"—a few years later Fuller would collaborate on a long poem with the poet to whom this outburst was addressed, James Fenton.)

Fuller published these five poems as *Epistles to Several Persons*. The title sets them firmly within an Augustan frame. The poems are essays, in the Augustan sense of the word, on poetry, music, politics, and the condition of England; in the Augustan manner also, they are *occasional* poems whose references date them to their year of composition. Far from being private, these poems embody something new in Fuller's work, something which had long been unfamiliar in English poetry. They are—and this is possibly the most important point to be made about them—*public* poems. That is, they occupy that vast disused territory in the landscape of

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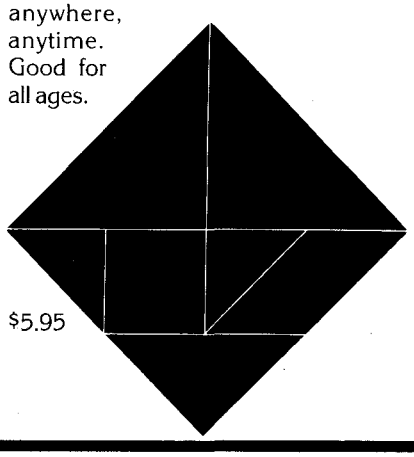

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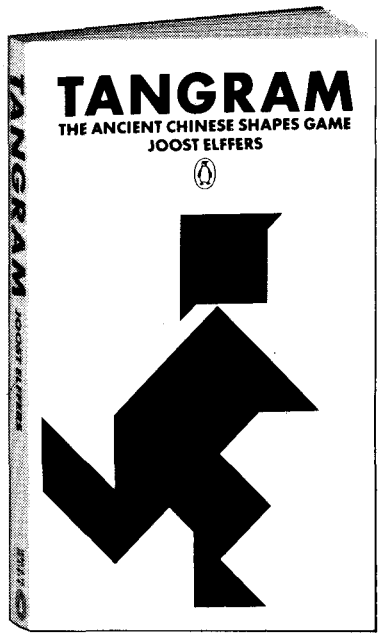

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verse rhetoric between the intimate and the oratorical, between the domestic and the sublime. They address themselves to named individuals, but they are not concerned with personalities or passions: they take their cues from their recipients' public roles—journalist, composer, editor academic, historian. The poems bristle with references, but these are neither learned nor private; they coincide with the interests common to the educated, newspaper-reading audience which is the only audience modern poetry has.

An aggressive tone surfaces occasionally in the *Epistles*, a survival from Augustan satire. This led one or two reviewers—who certainly shared the poems' attitudes and assumptions—to misread them as exercises in snobbery. Their tone actually points to an underlying modesty. To write public poems on public issues, while neither hoping to turn the engines of the state nor feeling bitter about poetry's inability to do so, is to acknowledge that the powers of literature are limited, that prophetic and unacknowledged-legislative claims have always been self-deceiving. But if limited, the power of poetry is real. It has none of the powers the Romantics claimed for it, but it can, through formal balance and verbal precision, bring issues into sharper focus, cause a disturbing increase in its audience's knowledge of the world's relationships. This is a small accomplishment, but it is at least genuine and not self-proclaimed.

Fuller's consonance of aim and achievement in these *Epistles*—possible for him only after he turned away from futile Herculean labors—makes itself felt with greater seriousness in the poems gathered in his next and most recent book, *The Mountain in the Sea*. Here Fuller has come entirely into his own. His renunciations are complete. The book contains no sonnets, not even any rhymes. Fuller sounds relieved that he no longer feels a need to drill his subjects into parade-ground formation. He knows himself a visitor in the world of objects, not an artist-hero determined to master it:

Something, perhaps an idea, is again eluding me.
It belongs nowhere in particular, but might
At any moment appear and surprise me. . . .

Nothing is spoken. The precise text of leaf
And crag is not known, or has been quite forgotten.
We're happy with what is offered, like visitors.

These poems keep a cautious, cagey respect for their subjects, a willingness to leave them alone, never to sing their transformations on a blue guitar. Precisely because Fuller's latest poems know the limits of poetic language—a knowledge modernism tried to avoid, and foundered in doing so—they have become deeper and more disturbing than they were before. His most recent work, written after *The Mountain in the Sea* and not yet collected, includes some rhyming poems, but these lack the old glitter; Fuller's renunciation of formal brilliance was less a vow of asceticism than a sobered turn toward careful moderation. His poems recognize the border between poetry and the world of fact as a surface easily wounded, too complicated and uneven to be polished smooth: "The meeting place of all the made/And unmade" is "a point of old discomfort." His earlier work used rhetorical elegance to protect itself from the world around it; now "Such diplomacy/Can scarcely guard us/From greater intimacy." Nor can it guard us from intimacy's risks. "Frightening," he writes in "Mushrooms"—"but still we search and pick."

The Mountain in the Sea is Fuller's best book, but two years after its appearance in England it lacks an American publisher. Outside some early pieces in anthologies, Fuller is known here only through his two previous books, published by David R. Godine in a single volume of *Poems & Epistles*. The formal precision of the first of these books and the Anglocentric props and vocabulary of the second could hardly have helped the poems' reception among an American audience. Through most of its history, American poetry has found its strength in a *resistive* stance against old forms and old manners, while Fuller's Augustan recollections are *receptive* instead. American poets have always taken the custom of poetic form as one best honored in the breach. One needn't look back as far as Whitman, or to Williams and Pound with their rhetoric of "breaking" the forms; pinned to any page of Lowell and Berryman some venerable stanza may be found bloody and disfigured. It would have been kinder to have set the forms free years ago, instead of keeping them home for a weekly Saturday-night beating, but American poets tend to thrive best when locked in struggle with their literary ancestry. (Some very good poets work best when they shape their vision to the form, rather than the reverse—one thinks of Hecht, Justice, Wilbur, Bowers—but they have a lonely embattled air to them, as if a threatening crowd chased them out of Greenwich Village once.)

In a recent essay in this series Allen Grossman was quoted as finding "the origin of poetic authority" in "the Wisdom tradition, which is not religion or thought but the sense of self in the highest mode imaginable." An assertion like this one, implying as it does heroic efforts at poetic independence from all limits of audience, language and form, stands firmly in the central line of the American tradition. That tradition is a local version of the Romantic inheritance which extends most vividly in English from Blake and Wordsworth to Yeats and Stevens; some of its light is reflected from the European traditions of Mallarmé and Rilke. This is the line in which an imaginative transformation of the world is more important, more interesting, more worthy of honor than the world itself. For better or worse, in America this tradition is now in the hands of the heirs of Wallace Stevens. At their best (as in some poems by John Ashbery) the heirs seem not entirely happy with their legacy. Although critical supporters in the universities want to proclaim them pure Romantics, new pioneers of the American sublime (for readers of this journal, names needn't be named), their work is more ironic, more cautious—and less self-deceived about its powers—than the work of their predecessors had ever been.

Yet whether tempered by irony or not, romantic assumptions remain central to American poetry, as to American criticism even at its most "advanced." This tradition is however in the midst of its own crisis, and there are signs that it may be in terminal decline. An alternative tradition—it can usefully be called Augustan in contrast with Romantic—has recently begun to reemerge with unexpected strength after 200 years of underground passage. In light of this, Fuller's work is as important for its suggestions of change in the literary and cultural atmosphere as for its own merits. If a tradition like the Augustan one should emerge in American poetry—it has already triumphed in American fiction in the work of Pynchon—it will take a form very different from its English counterpart, but Fuller's work can still suggest some of its characteristics.

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The recent recovery of Augustan traits—public, occasional, "kinetic" (to use as praise a term Joyce used for disapproval), collaborative, formal, receptive to tradition—was primarily the work of Auden in England and of Brecht in Germany. But Fuller has made his own contributions to the recovery of the public mode. The "we" in a Fuller poem (as in "The Cook's Lesson") is unlike anything else in modern poetry. It is a choral "we": neither a false-modest version of "I" nor a limitless generalization of humanity. Fuller's first-person plural evokes a group similar to his audience, and similar to poetry's audience: small enough to recognize its own boundaries, large enough to be receptive to variety.

Fuller's own receptivity, like that of his tradition, is far from mere passive acceptance; it is a way of identifying—without narrowing—one's past origins and present responsibilities. This cannot be done without making exclusions, but these are more reluctant and less heated than the exclusions that define and limit Romanticism. Fuller's own early style, in the mid-'60s, was built partly as a defense against an American takeover of English poetry which then appeared imminent. In the years when Fuller was finding his style, English poetry tended to think of itself as in disarray and decline, and began to look across the Atlantic for its models. Yet Fuller never tried to fake an American accent, even when he was most discontented with his own.

In the event, this proved to be the wisest course. The strongest growths of recent American poetry proved impossible to transplant into English soil; when English poetry cancelled its quarantine, what crossed the Atlantic was the sub-Black-Mountain fungus, which grows anywhere:

Ten years have witnessed a gigantic
Increase in the transatlantic
Subterranean mode, each antic
Sillier than the last,
Most a mere throwback to a frantic
Dadaist past. . . .

Oh those primitivist Panzers
Steamrolling Newcastle or Kansas
With misspelt lower-case bonanzas
Of pot and Zen
In which mistrust of things like stanzas
Shows they are men

And fit to blast an epic trail
Though with a certain mannered, frail
Excess that rises to a wail
When they're ignored . . .

What Fuller was shrewd enough to realize was this: American poetry found its vitality mostly in its own native tradition. If English poetry was to rise from its decline, it might be able to learn some construction methods from beyond its borders—as it had done in earlier periods of crisis—but its building materials would, as always, have to be native ones. If the coming years produce a new revival in English poetry, much of the credit should go to John Fuller. Not only will he have helped to build the new structure, he may also prove to have been the poet who discovered that the old building-stones were still sound, still capable of building strong walls with large windows.

Edward Mendelson

Edward Mendelson teaches 19th century and modern literature at Yale.

Books Considered

Earthly Possessions
By Anne Tyler

(Knopf, $7.95)

Earthly Possessions is Anne Tyler's seventh novel, and very much within the canon; she's staking out terrain. In a modest, offhand way—like one of her heroines, apologetic, forgetful, tugging at her sleeve until the handkerchief becomes pure silk and rabbits come leaping from hats—she's managed to appropriate a section of the South. Magic: it's a landscape in Maryland mostly, where old houses go to seed, whose occupants emerge to blink at the overstrong sun or waddle off to grocery stores, and which the protagonist flees. Artists or tinkerers drift through her pages as "victims of impulse"; they're all of them rooted, adrift.

Charlotte Emory, whose "marriage wasn't going well," goes to the bank to draw out her savings and leave. It is a journey she's been planning on for years, with no fixed purpose but escape: she's living in her mother's house, the center of a circle that seems to be contracting around her as it expands. She has planned to travel light, untrammelled by the furniture with which her preacher-husband—ironically, in terms of the title—filled the house. He had been her neighbor and seemed the spirit of adventure once, but his wanderlust is slaked. Theirs is the only residence left; the Clarion neighborhood sprouts gas stations on each corner as emblems of the road. But Saul—returned ostensibly to settle his parents' estate—settles instead in Charlotte's house and turn by turn brings his three brothers back. One of them builds doll furniture, ever more miniature, that fills the living room; another begs her, ineffectually, to run away with him; her father dies and she takes up his photography business; her mother dies but she cannot break loose. Her husband and two children are as hostages to fortune; she has a half-forgotten hundred dollar traveller's check tucked into her billfold, and a "Keep on Trucking" medallion that fell from a cereal box.

Therefore when Jake Simms, Jr., demolition driver and prison escapee, takes her hostage at the bank she is only half-unwilling. Charlotte runs with him in a white blur that makes it to TV. She trades her house for another sort of shell—a stolen 1950s roadster with the passenger door padlocked by a men's-room chain. Anyhow she cannot drive; anyhow she comes to see, on their shabby madcap journey south, that "we *are* traveling."

Yet Jake is no god in a car. He has two destinations: a home for unwed mothers in Georgia where his girlfriend Mindy waits, the next a motel in Florida, where his one friend Oliver may possibly provide them help. Along the way they share Doritos and warm Coke and money for gas and their claustrophobic histories; they share, if little else, a passion for departure that predicates return.

The book is contrapuntal, alternating chapters of the present action with chapters of first-person flashback. The brief opening scene at the bank, for instance, hovers just on the edge of the plausible—but is buttressed and defended later by Charlotte's memory of having been kidnapped before. These juxtapositions to the narrative sequence are uniformly rich: the crazed refugee at

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a fairground who kept the seven year old Charlotte hostage with paper-dolls; the single day at college till her fat cousin Clarence fetched her home (because her father, returning in the pick-up, had had a heart attack); the intimate distance she keeps from her mother or her adopted second child, Jiggs—all of this is handled with a compassionate precision that's Anne Tyler's trademark now. The dialogue has perfect pitch, the visual detail seems astonishing yet apt.

Sometimes the eye is a touch self-congratulatory, winking at itself while it catalogues each item on a grocery counter or lists six salient details of clothing at once. There's a way in which eccentricity becomes its own system and demands that *every* character be somehow peculiar, particular; there's a rigidity to these seemingly random associations that can wear thin.

The problem of maternity is a schematic case in point. Charlotte's mother is a grossly overweight blonde who thought her pregnancy was a grapefruit-like tumor and was taken by surprise; the daughter grows up dark and lean and alien, suspicious of a mix-up at the hospital. She is someone else's daughter, she believes, and her true life is being lived elsewhere. So she spends much of her time constructing alternative mothers (the woman at the fairground; Saul's mother Alberta—who ran off, scandalously, with her own father-in-law). Then, a mother herself, she hunts the maternal instinct within and comes up with a photograph of her mother's own true daughter. This turns out—in an otherwise moving death-bed reconciliation—to have been a photograph of her mother when an infant; there can be no further doubt as to authenticity.

This is all clever enough, and it does have resonance. But the true achievement of the novel resides elsewhere—in the conversations overheard and Founder's Day Parade ("ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF PROGRESS") witnessed, the liberation of Charlotte as hostage, the vulgar eloquence of Mindy as she pleads to keep her man. And somehow all the contriving—the mother's photograph that replicates Charlotte's childhood's own, linked subtly to the studio where Charlotte feeds off the escapist impulse of her clients yet "fixes" them forever—calls attention to itself. In a world where the chanciness of things seems central, such manipulation is inappropriate; the skein of coincidence points to no system but that of authorial control.

Nor do we know quite what Anne Tyler's trying to tell us. The book ends on a fade-out with Jake and Mindy safe—untouched by what must surely be the most inept police dragnet ever. And Charlotte, returning to Clarion and her puzzled husband, attains some sort of peace in stasis and refuses his proffered "trip."

"I don't see the need, I say. We have been traveling for years, traveled all our lives. We are traveling still. We couldn't stay in once place if we tried. Go to sleep, I say."

The aftertaste is bittersweet; she's glad to have done it, glad to have done with the doing. The moral would appear to be: if you find yourself life's hostage, may your fortune be propitious, with a robber not inclined to rape, and with a neat set of wheels.

Anne Tyler's standards are high; she works both hard and fast. Of her earlier novels, this seems most similar to *A Slipping-Down Life*—the antagonists and circumstance and action are equivalent—but *Earthly Possessions* is far better done. If not precisely a sequel to her previous works, it's nonetheless a companion-text; the narrative is supple and the world a pleasant place. Violence and lust are rare, or offstage; the characteristic emotions are abstracted ones—anger comes to us as vexation, bliss as a kind of contended release.

Yet I do not feel this novel represents advance. The wheels are a touch too audibly clicking, and inspiration seems second-hand. It's as if her sense of continuity overruled the chance of change; the book is programmatic and the program feels over-rehearsed. Still, anyone who wrote the splendid *Celestial Navigation* and *Searching For Caleb* should be allowed to take a breather—and, Ann Tyler's average work is more than good enough. *Earthly Possessions* is deft, good-humored and never less than engaging; one hopes its author, next time through, will once more be fully engaged.

Nicholas Delbanco

Nicholas Delbanco's most recent novel is *Possessions* (Morrow).

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Childwold
By Joyce Carol Oates

(Vanguard; $8.95)

In the years since her first books of fiction were published—a collection of short stories, *By the North Gate*, in 1963; her first novel, *With Shuddering Fall*, in 1964—the promise of Joyce Carol Oates's indisputable talent has been renewed but up to the present never satisfactorily fulfilled, in spite of her high degree of craftsman's skill and her impressive record of publication. (The total so far, including novels, collections of short stories, poetry, and criticism, an edited anthology, and a play, is some 25 books, which puts her in the same company as the prodigious producers of the 19th century.) The compression that imposes order on the short stories has also limited them, but in the seven novels up to and including *The Assassins* (1975) the fuller potentialities of the longer form somehow have not been realized. The ritualistic, often gratuitous acts of violence, less integrated into the realistic situation than in the stories, probably have belonged as much to a convention privately chosen by the author as to a personal obsession or, occasionally, symbolic intent. But such a convention would have been necessary in the first place because of basic weaknesses, in structure, in the conception of the characters, that had no other remedy. The greater fault, however, seems to have been in Oates's attitude toward her art in the first decade or so of her career as a public writer: a certain complacency in the repetition of old formulas; indifference to the literary influences that were unavoidable but because they were not recognized and explored or contended with could not be put to use; at the same time, certain general assumptions about literature, quasi-philosophical or quasi-religious in the manner of the late 1950s and early 1960s, that had been accepted years before and never reexamined. The essays in her two published collections (*The Edge of Impossibility: Tragic Forms in Literature*, 1972; *New Heaven, New Earth: The Visionary Experience in Literature*, 1974) are disappointing because—evidently through similar assumptions—they are conscientiously and relentlessly academic, without the close engagement with another's work and the sense of a common creative experience that in this century have made writers the most perceptive literary critics.

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Yet her study of the work of other writers, mostly in the modern novel, has coincided with a series of encouraging small changes in her later fiction—a greater sophistication of style, a better control of plot, reconsideration of her early farm and working-class characters, and, in *The Assassins*, the unexpected, tentative emergence of an art theme. A much greater change now has resulted in her eighth novel, *Childwold*. Although it is on schedule, her fourth published book in two years, this is a novel that at last is comparable on its own level to the best of her short stories and by an evolutionary leap has already moved beyond them, into the tradition of literature, going back at least as far as the Romantics, in which the philosophical problems of man's existence and his destiny are bound up with the problems of art.

Childwold is an isolated village in upstate New York that has been the setting of a number of Oates short stories and is the spiritual home of her sinister avatars of Natural Man. This time a more complex notion of the primitive is embodied in the Bartlett family, resident on a decaying farm owned by the immigrant grandfather. Arlene Bartlett is a cheerfully promiscuous widow; she and her married daughter Nancy share the numerous children, legitimate and illegitimate, of different ages and different fathers, whose constant, disorderly presence is a clue to one meaning of the Joycean title. On its positive side, the underdeveloped child-world signifies fertility, energy, potentiality, survival, in a paradise of nature not wholly lost. The dark side is the one Oates readers already know: chaos, brutality, irrationality, the barbarism without and within, represented here by Arlene's eldest son Vale, a Vietnam veteran who goes to the city and becomes a rapist and pathological thief.

The positive meaning is the one Childwold acquires for Fritz John Kasch, a writer and former academic, who after 20 years' absence returns to the nearby town of Yewville "for exploration of self, memory, soul." Like the title, his name invites word-play; initially it refers to his family's wealth, made in lumbering in the 19th century, which is in contrast to the foodstamp and county-welfare poverty of the Bartletts. Kasch begins to approach Childwold when he is perversely attracted to 14-year-old Laney Bartlett, one of Arlene's daughters. Like Nabokov's Humbert Humbert, Kasch in due course kills a rival; but by then the object of his passion is not Laney but Laney's mother, whom he has been planning to marry and join on the restored farm in what he expects will be his rebirth. After his trial and confinement in a mental hospital, he has another change of heart. In revulsion from his violent act, he breaks with both mother and daughter but eventually buys the farm and lives there alone, withdrawn from the world. Laney finds a new home with an aunt in Yewville and prepares for her future as one of Oates's upwardly mobile heroines, the only member of her family able to escape the limitations and dangers of the child-world.

As it is constructed, *Childwold* is free of the weaknesses of the novels that preceded it. The acts of violence, considerably reduced in number, are implied or referred to in the past tense. Events generally are subordinated to their effects, and the plot is subordinated to the method of narration, which combines multiple voices and multiple points of view (not always coinciding), with Kasch and his own creator sometimes competing in authorship. No recent writer is more practiced than Joyce Carol Oates in using this, the received device of the interior monologue, which carries associations of the great period of the modern novel. Now the historically weighted device and language itself—in pun, ambiguity, word-play—are not merely vehicles but are part of the larger theme involved in Kasch's regression. At one point, he decides that the "interior life" is the "authentic life," and reality a matter not of events but of "broken reflections," "flow of thought, feelings, emotions, observations": that is, the venerable stream of consciousness, which is the usual form of his meditations. In another section, as Laney rides on horseback along the symbolically named Eden River, receptive to the sights and sounds around her, she has a revelation of the sacredness of nature and her own place in it and, exalted, she is moved to speech. The gift of words Laney acquires for that moment is the gift Kasch resolves to give up when he turns to Arlene, because he detects something "positively demonic" in art, the life of words, and the life of reason altogether.

In *The Assassins*, disintegrating art and a failure of words are allied in a roundabout way to primitive destruction; here the connection is more direct. Kasch's last exercise of his unwanted gift is a remarkable prothalamion in which he embraces all of Childwold in his sexual embrace of Arlene; the cadences recall the Anna Livia Plurabelle episode in *Finnegans Wake*, whose elegiac tone is more appropriate to renunciation than nuptial joy. What Kasch loses without suppressing the demonic is indicated by his broken and confused memories of the murder. The last passage reflecting his interior life is a mechanical catalogue of disconnected and depersonalized impressions on the way out of town to the country.

In view of some of the allusions in Kasch's meditations and his author's interest in "visionary" literature, it may be that the recluse is reborn after all, with a new interior life and new spiritual wealth to revalidate his name. The closing words of the novel call in Laney's voice for "a sign," to tell her that Kasch is still alive and perhaps to tell her more. In one of her essays, Oates has defended the stories of Flannery O'Connor (for her, not the most fortunate influence) as religious parables. If *Childwold* is in part a religious parable, it is also a literary and cultural parable, in which intellectual primitivism is an urge to suicide, the death of art is due to the abdication of artists, and salvation is to be sought in the contemplative life. Joyce Carol Oates apparently would like to believe that such salvation is possible, and in this novel she gives force to the possibility by finding new resources in her own art.

Irene H. Chayes

Irene H. Chayes is a scholar and critic living in Silver Spring, Maryland.

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Byron's Letters & Journals, Volume VI: 1818-1819 edited by Leslie A. Marchand

(Harvard Univ. Press; $13.50)

The Late Lord Byron: Posthumous Dramas by Doris Langley Moore

(Harper & Row; $25)

In January 1818 Lord Byron passed his 30th birthday—he would have only six more—in Italy, in his second year of self-exile. He had left England amid debts, marital discord and scandal. The daughter he had last seen when she was a month old he would never see again, nor would he ever again see his estranged wife Annabella, his "moral Clytemnestra." He had already concluded his stormy relationship with Claire Clairmont, William Godwin's headstrong stepdaughter (and half-sister to Mary Shelley), who had forced herself on Byron and provided him with another baby daughter. And he had fallen in and out of love with the dark-eyed Marianna Segati, the young wife of his landlord, and then with the sultry but illiterate Margharita Cogni. Still he had energy enough for a series of long verse satires, beginning with *Beppo*, and continuing with *Don Juan;* and his sardonic wit had been sharpened by the ironic complications of his life.

The sixth volume of his lively letters, covering 1818 and 1819, and impeccably edited as usual by Leslie Marchand, begins with the dissolute Carnival in Venice. He looked forward, Byron wrote Thomas Moore, to his infant daughters as the pillars of his old age, "supposing that I ever reach—which I hope I never shall—that desolating period." Meanwhile, at Carnival, he vowed to Moore, "I will work the mine of my youth to the last veins of the ore, and then—good night. I have lived, and am content."

Venice was lively, and he quickly acquired, so he wrote John Cam Hobhouse, "the first Gonorrhea I have not paid for." He was working off his disgust with England and his frustrations over his abortive marriage in an orgy of womanizing—"a world of other harlotry," he described it, and boasted to Hobhouse in May 1818 that his hands were full—"whatever my Seminal vessels may be." In a mock letter ostensibly written by Byron's servant William Fletcher, "Fletcher" informed Hobhouse that Byron had died of "anxiety—sea-bathing—women and riding in the Sun," and that he could abide no people but prostitutes. Much alive, however, Byron indulged himself tirelessly in swimming as well as whoring, swimming one summer afternoon from the Lido to the end of the Grand Canal—nearly five miles—in less than four hours. "I could not be much fatigued," he boasted to Hobhouse, "having had a *piece* in the forenoon—& taking another in the evening at ten of the Clock."

Understanding "the great advantage of getting the water between a man and his embarrassments," Byron sold his English property to pay his debts; lived imprudently but stylishly, claiming to James Wedderburn that he had spent half his income on sex, having had 200 women "of one sort or another" in two years; kept 14 servants, a nurse for his illegitimate daughter Allegra, and a gondola; and wrote witty stanzas of *Don Juan* by the yard and yet at the top of his satiric form. But by the time the second canto was completed, his publisher John Murray had cautiously begun to suggest censoring parts of the first, Byron warning him against cant and prudery. "I maintain," he insisted, "that it is the most moral of poems—but if people won't discover the moral that is their fault not mine. . . . If it is stupid it will fail—but I will have none of your damned cutting & slashing. . . . I will have no gelding."

By the spring of 1819 he had encountered the last great love of his life (the first had been his half-sister Augusta, to whom he still wrote tenderly, although, tormented by guilt, she now betrayed his unguarded letters to his implacable wife). The Contessa Teresa Guiccioli of Ravenna was 19, third wife of a 50-ish Conte. As Byron pursued her and wooed her and when apart wrote her ardent letters in Italian (here published in the original as well as in translation), he did not forget Augusta Leigh, whom he assured, "I have never ceased nor can cease to feel for a moment that perfect & boundless attachment which bound & binds me to you—which renders me utterly incapable of *real* love for any other human being—what could they be to me after *you?*. . . . We may have been very wrong—but I repent of nothing but that cursed marriage—& your refusing to continue to love me as you had loved me."

Absence, he observed to her, annihilated weak passions and confirmed strong ones; yet he would never see her again, and knew that to love he had to love what was at hand and what was less taboo, for a young and beautiful married woman in Italy with only one lover was practically without stain, however jealous her husband. With the aid of a priest, a chambermaid, a young Negro boy and a female friend of the Contessa, the unlawful relationship ripened. But Byron knew that the life he had been leading was burning him out. He confided from Ravenna to a friend in England, "My personal charms have by no means increased—my hair is half-grey—and the Crow's foot has been rather lavish of its indelible steps.—My hair though not gone seems going—and my teeth remain by way of courtesy, but I suppose they will follow—having been too good to last."

As the letters end with the end of 1819, Byron confides to Douglas Kinniard in London that he has not "had a whore this half-year, confining myself to the strictest adultery." And he boasts that his writing is as good as ever. "As to *Don Juan* confess—confess—you dog—and be candid—that it is the sublime of *that there* sort of writing—it may be bawdy—but is it not good English?—it may be profligate—but is it not life, is it not *the thing?* Could any man have written it—who has not lived in the world?—and tooled in a post-chaise? in a hackney coach?—in a Gondola? against a wall? in a court carriage? in a vis à vis?—on a table?—and under it?"

One comes with regret to the end of the year, and the book, knowing that the life and the letters and the volumes have little more to run. "My taste for revolution is abated—with my other passions," Byron had told Hobhouse. Yet his end would come unexpectedly, early in 1824, not via the sword of a cuckolded Conte but from disease amidst a revolution in backward, Turkish-ruled Greece. To John Murray he had written, bitterly, also in 1819, "I am sure that my Bones would not rest in an English grave—or my Clay mix with

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the earth of that Country:—I believe the thought would drive me mad on my death-bed could I suppose that any of my friends would be base enough to convey my carcase back to your soil.—I would not even feed your worms—if I could help it." But a friend—the young brother of his coquettish contessa—would escort Byron's remains home to England, where—since neither the Abbey nor St. Paul's would have him—the blackest sheep of his generation was escorted by a cortège of 47 coaches with armorial bearings to the family vault at Hucknall Torkard, near Nottingham.

Then would begin a drama as complicated as was Byron's life, the confused and hypocrisy-filled aftermath written about in the best literary detective tradition by Doris Langley Moore, first published in 1961 as *The Late Lord Byron*, and followed up in 1974 by her tangled tale of Byron's finances and friends in *Lord Byron: Accounts Rendered*. Now Harper & Row (publisher of *Accounts Rendered*) has reissued the earlier book, first published by Lippincott, with only the addition of a new two-page preface and the correction of the first edition's misprints. It is well worth having available again, although inflation has tripled the original $8.50 price.

Byron's posthumous affairs, Doris Langley Moore shows, were in greater disarray than his chaotic life. Hobhouse, his executor, even strove, successfully, to burn Byron's manuscript memoirs as well as to withhold other biographical material in order to preserve the poet's fame in the most respectable manner possible under the floodlit circumstances. The result, instead, was a deluge of mischievously distorted and self-serving books about Byron by his friends and enemies, while the surviving documents which might have dramatized the real man were sequestered for more than a century. In their stead arose not only a Byron myth of a monstrous and unspeakable genius but also a Lady Byron myth of the undeviating rectitude of the revengeful widow. Even the bungling and frightened Augusta, to rescue her own respectability, tarnished as it was by the tale-bearing about homosexuality and incest by Byron's one-time mistress and confidant Lady Caroline Lamb, supported the saintly Annabella. Meanwhile the fabrications of such psudo-memorists as E.J. Trelawny, "Lord Byron's jackal," not only passed for truth, but persisted because of the inherent tenacity of the picturesque untruth.

In Greece as well as in England, confusion and worse followed Byron's death. Patriotism disappeared in an orgy of jobbery and squandering, and hundreds of thousands of pounds for Greek independence raised by the poet's reputation lined pockets in England and abroad. Bankers helped themselves to confiscatory brokerage fees; English admirals and generals were hired at outrageous salaries yet were never to leave London; and in Greece itself rapacity and mismanagement diminished whatever funds remained. Hobhouse, Byron's harassed surrogate, had only one remedy—"to keep matters quiet" and to prevent "any squabbling in public."

It is in character that books about Byron should have comedy amid the tragedy and be rich in high as well as in low gossip, little of it in the least literary; yet somehow the sixth Lord Byron, in his hugely lived life, emerges almost godlike from the morass. It was fitting that he should die, albeit squalidly, almost in the shadow of Olympus.

Stanley Weintraub

Stanley Weintraub is author most recently of a Korean War memoir, *War in the Wards* (Presidio Press).

The Alteration
by Kingsley Amis

(Viking; $7.95)

It is 441 years after Martin Luther was elected Pope, a few less after Sir Thomas More followed him to Rome as Hadrian VII, and 58 after Rudyard Kipling's last year in office as president of the US (or, rather, First Citizen of the RNE, Republic of New England, a vast nation 1000 miles north to south, reaching 800 miles inland, bordered by the nations of Florida and Louisiana to the south and New Muscovy to the west). 1976. The Ottoman Empire and the Schismatic RNE (where one William Shakespeare died in exile and excommunication) aside, the world is ruled by Mother Church and her various secular arms: Jews wear stars of David on their clothing, science is kept in bounds, electricity is frowned upon, and the making of *castrati* is still practiced (although not in the RNE, where such treatment is penal, not artistic, reserved for incorrigible felons and rebellious Indians). None of this should suggest a civilization dead to higher culture—Mozart is valued (especially his Second Requiem, K. 878), Beethoven, who died before the maturity of his art, is known and honored by some cognoscenti, theology is advanced by such as A.J. Ayer, Professor of Dogmatic Theology at New College, and the Jesuit father Jean-Paul Sartre; nor a civilization without pop culture—to be read by working-men, schoolboys under the covers, and bishops on the sly are TR (Time Romance) and CW (Counterfeit World), vaguely pornographic fictions about an imagined world imperfectly resembling ours.

Why alter history so? According to Kingsley Amis, for the sake of the plot. We need a world in which it's believable that the church would select a 10-year-old English boy soprano for castration, gain the approval of his father, mutilate a priest who refuses to give his signature for the operation, and force the boy, Hubert Anvil, after he has learned something of what he'll be missing, to flee to the New Englander embassy in London for asylum—unsuccessfully, it turns out, for brutally ironic and gratuitous reasons. That explanation doesn't work; it's doubtful it was meant to.

When Hubert is chosen for "alteration" he is at first honored; he recognizes it as a testament to his craft, at which he is a genius. He knows what sex is, more or less, but not what it *is*. Then events instruct him, in a naive and affecting way. He learns from his mother (just having fallen in love with Hubert's major intercessor) that "The love we speak of is not the highest but it is the strongest and most wonderful, and it transforms the soul, and nothing else is like it"; from his unromantic older brother Hubert surmises that sex is like: "Kissing a girl . . . with no clothes on while it felt like playing with himself but like the wonderful ice-cream and she behaved like a very friendly cat—that would have to do for now, and perhaps parts of it were right"; and at the end Hubert know it's terrible to be forbidden

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a realm of experience and a psychic motivation large enough to contain a graceless, grotesque fornication he has witnessed in a wood, his mother's willingness to risk herself in a hopeless and tragic adultery, and the impulse to paint a beautiful Eve he has seen on his brother's wall. But at the end he must make do with devotion to his art, a trust in the will of God interpreted by the church, and the faint self-assurance that what he doesn't *really* know can't hurt him all that much by its absence.

Hubert's alteration and the alteration of history tell us what the novel is really about: whether our Now is now, or some other Now is now, nothing essential changes: innocence is damned.

But there's something too mannered and clever by far about the alteration of history, the quality of the in-joke. We are never far, no matter how touching the story of a protagonist fully deserving of our compassion and admiration, from a kind of manic satire with no specific and contained object. Amis, it seems to me, practices the kind of comedy Bergson called a temporary anaesthetic to the heart, which is rather curious. Amis himself never becomes mawkish in the least: why the fear for his reader?

The penultimate scene for instance of *The Alteration* is coronary anaesthesia at its best. Pope John XXIV—one fat Englishman of the people, an inventor named Maserati, and the Italian Cardinal Berlinguer (get it?) are discussing Maserati's failure to poison sufficient numbers of the population with doses of something called Crick's Conductor in the water supply. "Fuck your facilities!" says the Pope to Maserati's protest of insufficient technology. Some way must be found to reduce an expanding population if chemical "castration" won't do it. One can't just "Shoot them" as Cardinal Berlinguer suggests, and since "that bugger Innocent the Seventeenth" published a Bull prohibiting artificial regulation, about the only thing left is a war with Islam, which, if not pursued too efficiently at the beginning, ought to wipe out several million Christians. The scene is worth its every word. I'm only sorry it interrupts Hubert's pathetic and stunning daydreaming of the future denied him.

Amis must tire of being known as the author of *Lucky Jim*, 11 novels, a short-story collection, two books of poems, and five volumes of criticism and commentary. This novel probably would not have altered that reputation in any essential way, but a dozen or so pages shorter it might have cut somewhat closer.

Samuel Hux

Samuel Hux writes for *Dissent*, *Change*, and *Commentary* and teaches at York College, CUNY.

Brief Reviews

The Hidden Malpractice by Gena Corea

(Morrow; $10)

Corea's book is a systematic and thoroughly researched account of the position of women in the medical profession from about 1800 to the present, with an emphasis on the latter. Health care for women, Corea argues, is adversely affected by the proportion of men in medicine (in 1974 slightly less than nine percent of MDs were women). She discusses the treatment of specifically female conditions (menstruation and menopause, obstetrics and abortion); and the status of research into areas which differ in treatment for men and women, such as venereal disease and birth control.

The 19th century horror stories fall so close behind the 20th century ones that the result is confusing and occasionally misleading; and Corea is of course apt to speculate as bleakly as possible about areas where knowledge is scarce, and quote some of the extravagances of the medical popularizers (such as the author of *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex*) disproportionately. But the facts themselves are staggering: hysterectomies, one third of which Corea cites as unnecessary, are the second most frequently performed operation in the US (one cannot help wondering what is the first—having one's tonsils removed?). I'm reminded of a recent newscast where one doctor defended "unnecessary" hysterectomies, arguing that the operation was justified if it relieved the anxiety of women afraid they might develop cancer. "Then," a reporter commented, "if someone is worried about getting cancer in the elbow, his whole arm may be removed."

Less sensational but perhaps more revealing is the dearth of research into the prevention and detection of gonorrhea in women, in whom it is significantly more difficult to detect (and therefore to treat) than in men. The disease has been declared epidemic in the US.

Fata Morgana by William Kotzwinkle

(Knopf; $7.95)

Kotzwinkle knows that mysteries are the most satisfying of books not because everyone gets his just deserts but because in the best of them there are no gratuitous elements, no existential occurances. Inspector Picard follows the trail of the gypsy Lazare, and the elements which emerge from the fraudulent glitter of Paris—the abandoned lavishness of the *masques*, the tarot cards, the jeweled gowns trailing in the filth of the Paris streets—fall magically together. The world created has a sensuous order; the ending is a necessary irritation, and Kotzwinkle rather gracelessly disregards it. But the chase itself is perfect.

Loose Change: Three Women of the Sixties by Sara Davidson

(Doubleday; $9.50)

O the '60s—the decade eludes us, it shimmers like silver between the colorless '50s and the practical '70s, and even as this decade clumps to its end we are still looking. Where did it go? The student demonstration for Free Speech and the People's Park in Berkeley, the burning of ROTC buildings, Bob Dylan and the Kennedy assassination and Timothy Leary's eviction with Richard Alpert from Harvard for experimenting with LSD, Haight-Ashbury, the Sexual Revolution, the communes at Wheeler Ranch and Hog Farm; encounter groups and Kent State and Mick Jagger's free concert for The People in San Francisco—surely something came of this, even if there was no Revolution. Davidson's book, cheaply cathartic and curiously apolitical, provides no answers.

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Two Children's Books for Adults

A Long Trip to Teatime by Anthony Burgess

(Stonehill; $8.95)

Poor Edgar, caught in a children's book with possibly the worst story ever created: a series of entirely fortuitous incidents, all happening much too fast and connected only by historical and literary allusions, word plays and puns he cannot possibly understand. "Delightful," Edgar says politely after the rendition of a song about a noted astronomer and his research into the "stellar system and the constitution of the stars.""Delightful?" the singer cries, indignant: "Stella Cistern was one of the most beautiful girls in the world."

Here too is wealth of very endearing (and deliberately) bad verse. Burgess is master of a peculiar sort of rhyme, pairing vanilla custard with ". . . they say they must. A d-/-ay goes hardly by . . ." and attributing the whole thing to the 18th century Mr. Gray, who did indeed write some dreadful verse. Or in a song about a pancake:

Although it looked delish-
Ous. 'Oh, eat me not,' it yelled,
For you have ate more than enough.
Your stomach is completely felled.
It did not speak so good. I held
My peace . . .

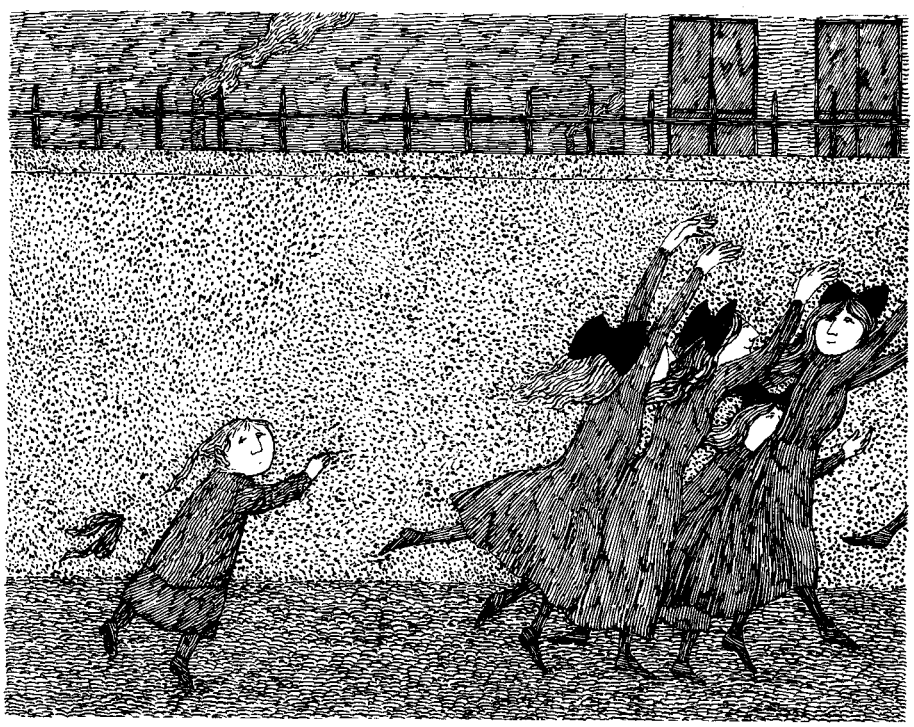
But though apparently built around the letter E, the references and word play are essentially disconnected and the whole vaguely unsatisfying. Purely as a vehicle for these games, the trip to teatime is sometimes as tiresome as it is long. The line drawings by Fulvio Testa, however, are wonderful. Perhaps we would be best off looking just at the pictures.

The Loathsome Couple by Edward Gorey

(Dodd, Mead; $4.95)

"This book," the flap reads, "may well prove to be the author's most unpleasant ever": it does. Gorey has the knack for assembling the most revolting details, for selecting the most abhorrent characterizations. Harold Snedleigh, who at the age of 12 has "caught the cold that afterwards never left him," and Mona Gritch who as a child "already had thick ankles and thin hair" embark upon a career of childslaughter, are duly caught, sentenced, and finally die. The line drawings, characterized by a similar attention to detail, are possibly the most brilliantly dreary Gorey has yet produced. My favorite is of the couple's meal after the first child's murder: "cornflakes and treacle, turnip sandwiches, and artificial grape soda."

Roberta Tovey



© Edward Gorey *As a child Mona already had thick ankles and thin hair.*

TRB, *from page 2*

States, who helped her in what they thought was a "peaceful" enterprise. It sets up a chain reaction of its own: China got the bomb, then India, now maybe Pakistan (from France).

The US was slow to see what was happening. Two American firms, Westinghouse and Bechtel, proposed to sell Brazil the wherewithal for a plutonium-power package but the American government vetoed it as too dangerous. Brazil then went to West Germany which worked out the present eight-billion-dollar deal for a fast breeder to produce power, and for the additional facilities for enrichment and reprocessing, which are the doorways to becoming a nuclear weapon country.

Soviet Russia is almost as eager to stop nuclear proliferation as the United States. Moscow doesn't want some of its little neighbors to have bombs. In 1970 the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) took effect, organized by Russia and the United States. It is a lovely device from the point of view of the two superpowers. They are permitted to keep the weapons they have and to add to their vast arsenals. But the non-weapon states which sign the treaty are prohibited from buying or making nuclear weapons.

The watchdog of NPT is the International Atomic Energy Agency. Should one laugh or cry over this puny little pup, which has little bark and no bite? Its job is to shuffle papers, to look at reports of the 92 NPT countries and to conduct inspections. Summarizing it, a witness before the Glenn subcommittee, Denis Hayes of Worldwatch Institute, said that all nuclear vendors, except France, now demand such inspections as a condition of sale. It is, of course, a good idea. But the agency has only 70 technicians. A good-sized "tame" thermal reactor for commercial use costs about a billion dollars and a fast breeder plutonium reactor a lot more. The shoestring IAEA has a budget of only about five million dollars.

The Glenn subcommittee is considering legislation proposed by President Carter, and bills of its own, trying to bolster the precarious international system. Few pay it heed. Some despair already. "I'm glad I'm not a young man," says David Lilienthal, 77, first chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, "and I'm sorry for my grandchildren." This is the critical moment when some progress by Russia and the United States at the SALT talks might preserve world sanity.

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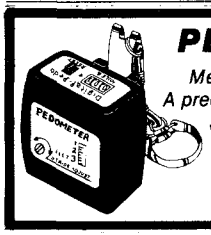

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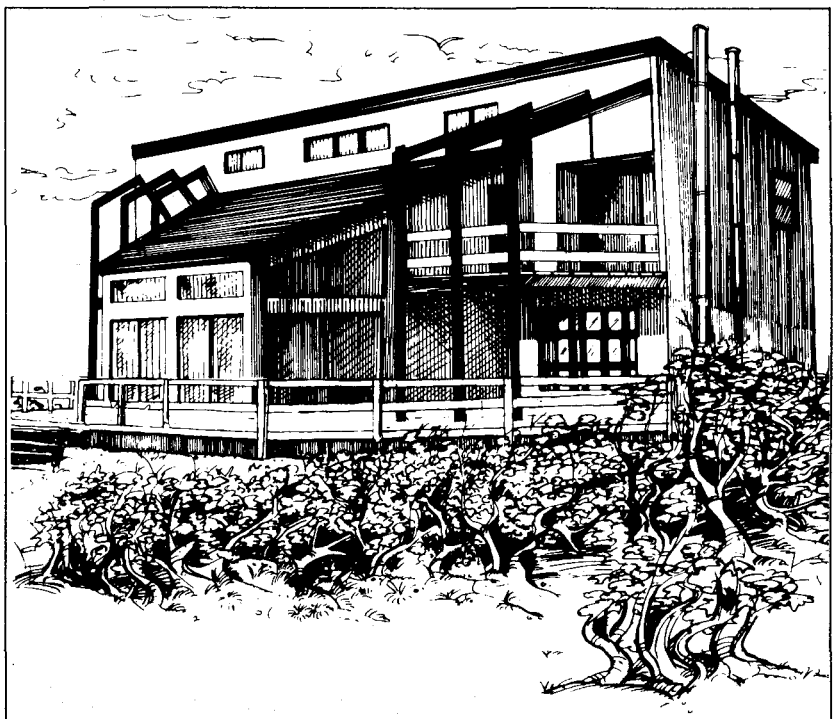

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The end of history: not those lurid visions of apocalypse that, through an academic enterprise called "futurology," have united social theory and science fiction. What I think is eroding in our culture, though, is historical memory. Of course people will still remember a failed love; as Kay Boyle says in one of her stories, "nothing ever breaks but the heart." Historical memory, however, deals with the bad breaks not of individuals, but of people and peoples in civilization. The great Progressive historiographer James Harvey Robinson argued that every generation needs to be its own historian. That was a call not to forget history, but to examine it again and again and to use it. Assuredly he did not mean falsifying or twisting history.

Not that the calculated distortions of history haven't been a factor in the world's lapse into amnesia. My friend Mort Zuckerman, a brilliantly successful real estate developer and colleague at Harvard, has just returned from China with a group (or, as they're inevitably called there, "a delegation") of city planners. The Chinese show their achievements and cover up their troubles, as if what's wrong with society isn't as interesting or significant as what's right. Or more so. When one of the failures protrudes through the desperately fixed facade, the explanation is always "the gang of four," whose miserable effigies are visible everywhere. That is not an evocation of the past but a police warning to tow the line of the hour. In China, Zuckerman tells us in the *Boston Globe*, you jog along main arteries of the biggest cities without fear of being killed by cars or pedestrians and not yet by noxious fumes. That kind of experience, which jolts memory, might have helped the Chinese, but they won't let it happen.

Once I was at the Museum of the History of the October Revolution in Moscow. There the distortions of history are on display. Just as men and women are routinely and unpredictably eradicated from texts and life, so also are they eliminated from pictures and paintings (and sometimes suddenly "rehabilitated"). The most famous case is a fresco-sized depiction of an early revolutionary Soviet. Trotsky has been painted out, his presence magnified for those who know by the awkward emptiness of his place. And for those who don't quite know, there probably is a resigned suspicion that the past has been touched up yet again.

Not only the adversary societies tamper with the truth or simply omit it. A forthcoming edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary originally defined Jerusalem as a city in Israel sacred to Jews, Christians and Moslems. There might have been a more complicated and even more accurate definition. But under pressure from the Arabs the editors have now changed the entry to "a city west of the Jordan." That's an evasion that amounts to a falsehood. Who did the fixing in London? A banker? A scholar? There is nothing quite so craven as a vanquished empire. Its manners survive a while, but its honor doesn't.

Carrying a grudge is not the same as remembering. So President Carter, who apparently knows something about grudges, can also be quick to forgive, which in politics—though not in human relations—is close to forgetting. He went to Geneva to see President Assad, and after 20 minutes together called the Syrian head of state his old and good friend, praising him for his moderation, his good intentions and his will to peace. Bernard Gwertzman, who knows better, writes his amens in the *Times;* Henry Tanner, who doesn't know better, confirms the same nonsense in the same paper. Arnaud de Borchgrave would confirm it in *Newsweek*, even if he did know better which he assiduously keeps himself from doing. Instant trust is not wise counsel to presidents. If it comes naturally, though, what then mean Assad's years of truculent violence, his commitment to the destruction of Israel? Why believe his squeamish formulations of today over his thundering threats of many yesterdays? And what about the reliability of his words and the predictability of his actions? Switching sides in Lebanon, and leaving fields of maimed and murdered as evidence that he was there? And just how moderate can he be whose political enemies are left hanging for days in the city square?

The problem with the Jews is that History has trained them to remember, which is why they may be less prone to forgive. One of my sons, then seven, came with me to Jerusalem. We went to the museum of the holocaust, the Yad Vashem; while walking through its fearful corridors, Jesse said he felt like vomiting, which he did—fortunately in a toilet outside. "Do you have a stomach ache, Jesse?" "No, it's the pictures, Dad." "We needn't go back." "Oh we must, if the pictures did that to me they're telling me something important." On the way out of the Yad Vashem there's an "Avenue of the Righteous," with trees planted in the names of those who helped save the lives of hunted Jews. And my son commented, "So many killers inside, so few trees." Jews say "let us remember." I've just reread a stirring book by Marie Syrkin, *Blessed is the Match: the story of Jewish Resistance* (new edition, Jewish Publication Society). The book first appeared shortly after World War II. All of Hannah Arendt's isolated examples of Jewish passivity do not come close to undermining Syrkin's case for Jewish heroism against brutal enemies and before the eyes of indifferent observers. That's why the Jews will be a little obstinate in Israel. Trust of the sparse testimony for Arab trustworthiness will not be taken as wise counsel in Israel. And it is right that it not be.

Gerald Ford had no memory or stomach for the past. That's why, I think, he pardoned Nixon almost before he'd found his way around the White House. Ford did not know his real father until one day, when he was working as a soda jerk, a man came up to him and said, "I am your father." Ford immediately responded, "I forgive you." What he was forgiving was the greatest of pains, that of desertion by a parent. Someone who forgives that so easily is capable of forgiving anything.

M. P.

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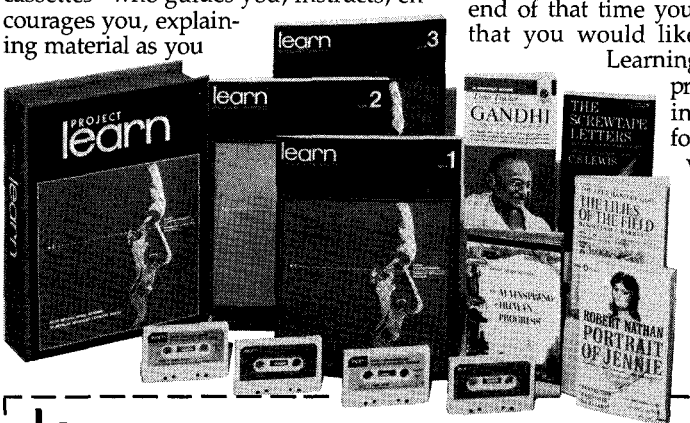

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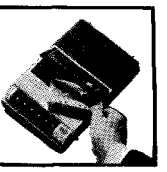

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Brand K Mild	14	0.9
Brand W Lights	13	0.9
Brand M Lights	13	0.8
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Brand V Menthol	11	0.7
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Brand M	8	0.5
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